

INFANT SALVATION
AND
CONFESSIONAL REVISION

LUTHER LINK

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INFANT SALVATION

AND

Confessional
Revision

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LUTHER LINK

Minister of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States



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PREFACE

The Southern Presbyterian Church has been wrestling for a long time with the matter of the revision of the Westminster Confession, in one form or another. First, there was a call for a revision of the proof-texts attached to the various sections by way of giving the scriptural basis for these statements. This has taken several years to finish, but the work is illogical and incomplete because it was done on the understanding that the text of the Confession itself was not to be touched; so where statements were not capable of being supported by Scripture proof there ordinarily occurs a blank instead of such irrelevant texts as formerly stood in many places for proof. The proof-text committee made no recommendation of change in the Confession. But the fact that any statements are incapable of proof of some kind calls for the revision of the Confession itself, which in its very nature is simply a declaration to the world of what we believe the Bible to teach.

Only one question of revision of the text of the Confession has so far been before the church at large, and that is the revision of the third section of chapter ten, commonly called the "elect infant clause." Our church has wrestled with this question for a number of years, but seems little nearer a solution of it than when the agitation began. The anti-revisionists insist that the word "elect" shall stand, occupying the inconsistent and even contradictory attitude of holding that they believe in the salvation of all dying infants, but that the Bible does not definitely teach that all such are saved. But a creed should contain only what we are able to reasonably support by Scripture proof. They fail to see that it is inconsistent to talk of an elect class of dying infants, because an elect, that is, limited, class necessarily excludes the counterpart remnant of the non-elect class. It may be esteemed only a question of doubt, or we may say lack of knowledge, respecting this non-elect class which is thus left out, but it is understood to embrace the children of the heathen; and the application of the word "elect" as a limiting term is to the children of the church as contradistinguished from the children of the heathen. But since elect and non-elect are necessarily counterparts, a professed knowledge of one must imply a corresponding knowledge of the other; and if we are ignorant of the latter class we must of necessity be also of the former. The idea that we have a knowledge of an elect class of dying infants is therefore a simple delusion, and it is inconsistent in the anti-revisionists to demand absolute proof of universal infant salvation as a necessary prelude to the elimination of the word "elect." If they know nothing of a non-elect class they know nothing of an elect class, and the Bible is as silent about the one as about the other.


The fact is that the Bible does not speak of election in connection with dying infants. The question of their election must therefore be an inference from the prior fact of their salvation. The demand for the reverse order of logic, namely, that the fact of their election be supplied as a basis for the knowledge of their salvation, is unreasonable and inconsistent. We have no more knowledge of the election of adults than of infants, except as they are known to be of the faith. As for infants their inability to exercise faith is the basis of our judgment and knowledge that it is not required of them unto salvation. This rational judgment of common sense is supported by the Scripture which teaches that the little ones are not held to the accountability of grown people. This is so perfectly simple that every unsophisticated person is able to see it, and only the theologically trained are blind to it. Assuredly there is a reason for this blindness—this balking at the idea that even the infant children of unbelievers and heathen are saved in the same way as the children of the church.

The discrimination which has been made is apparently the result of two exegetical blunders. The first grows out of the doctrine of the covenant of works which by reason of the fall holds every soul of the human race guilty of Adam's first sin; and the logic is, that because infants are just as subject to this effect of the fall as grown people, therefore they are just as liable to the punishment of eternal death as grown people. The logic which is thus so confidently relied upon is defective and inconclusive in view of the fact that God provided salvation for the world. Original sin is confounded with the final judgments of God upon the simple idea that guilt is obligation to punishment. Infants are guilty, and therefore must be liable to punishment, therefore the children of the heathen must be lost, especially as there is no clear revelation (they think) of the fact that they are saved. Such is the one-sided and perverse logic of those who believe in possible or probable infant damnation; and this is the real secret of the fact that the anti-revisionists hold on with a persistent determination to the idea that we really know nothing of the salvation of the infant children of the heathen. Our church has simply played with this question, and the surface of it has hardly been scratched, for only within the last year have the real merits of the question been touched in the recent discussions of infant salvation. At least this is the way it appears to us.

The writer was for a long time cut off from this debate. We tried in vain to get published an answer to one of the prominent anti-revisionists in the early stage of the discussion, and in spite of the fact that the writer has spent years of time in the study on the theological questions involved in this discussion, he found himself shut out of the discussion and forced to provide his own means of access to the reading public. With very great sorrow the writer came to the conclusion that our religious press is free to a very limited extent. Instead of encouraging discussion on the important questions which come up for decision, discussion has been often suppressed by the arbitrary decision of papers

who furnish the journalism of our church. The consequence of this editorial management is that the church is retrograding and reaching a point where we rarely get anything discussed except in the most superficial manner. We stand in imminent danger of losing our birthright, because of the shortsighted policy of our journals. The demand for light and popular and brief articles is fast freezing out our scholarship or causing it to go into hiding.

The writer perceived long ago that the merits of this question, namely, the doctrine of infant salvation had never received an adequate discussion or investigation. A careful reading of all the treatises on this subject served only to reveal their defective nature, so we took up the Scriptures for an original study of the question, and wrote a number of articles as the passages were examined. The result was as before mentioned. We were shut out of the discussion. We now appeal to the people who feel enough interest in the truth to make them willing to devote some earnest thought to these matters.



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Infant Salvation

AND

Confessional Revision

REVISION OF THE CONFESSION.

ORIGIN OF THE DIFFICULTIES.

In discussing the Revision of the Confession, it seems best to begin with that question which is just now before the Presbyteries for their decision. That question is the revision of the elect infant clause and section.

The last Assembly (1911) simply marks time on this question by sending down a wording which omits "elect" in the first clause, but retains it in the second in such a way as to make it apply to both. Of course there is nothing gained by this, and it simply means that the anti-revisionists have not moved a peg in their position, and are determined not to yield an inch until driven to it by a three-fourths majority. It would be easy to make a statement of simply the manner of infant salvation, and this would eliminate "elect" from both clauses, leaving out of view entirely the question of who or how many infants and idiots are saved. But the last Assembly has given the death blow to that unworthy effort to avoid the implication which necessarily goes with the use of "elect," in the limiting sense. Having omitted "elect" from the first clause, the statement becomes what anti-revisionists have all along claimed it to be, a statement simply of the way in which infants are saved. But when the parties who constructed the new wording came to the second clause, instead of omitting "elect," and making it a strict parallel, they retained "elect" and changed the wording so as to avoid the clear implication that all of these classes are elect. "So also are all others who are included in the election of grace," etc. Thus what they took away with one hand they restore with the other. They appear at first to take away "elect," and seem to remove the difficulty, else why make any change? But they restore it by implication, the only advantage being that the inference will probably be overlooked. This appears to be simply trifling with a great issue and to be beneath the dignity of a church like ours. An open profession of faith in possible or probable infant damnation,—or better, an excision of the clause,—is infinitely superior to such a patent dodge.

The anti-revisionists have been driven to the wall, and forced in this way to acknowledge that they do believe in probable infant damnation, for otherwise they would not insist on speaking of the salvation of an elect class of dying infants and idiots.

The question then arises at once, What is the explanation of the tenacious hold which infant damnation has upon many of our people? One explanation we dare say is found in the doctrine of the covenant of works applied to the particular classes in question. It is the doctrine that men are held guilty of Adam's act of disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit. If it were not for the prior theory of a covenant of works, as a contract between God and Adam, the above supposition would appear at once abhorrent to every sense of justice and right. Its acceptance depends purely upon the alleged fact that God did it. This alone silences cavil, for "shall not the judge of all the earth do right"? So positive have the theologians been in the assertion of this strange transaction that it has been long accepted for a fact, and men have forgotten to examine the foundation upon which the alleged fact rests. The boldness and baldness of the doctrine of immediate imputation can alone account for that dulling of the sense of justice which makes the doctrine of infant damnation seem possible not to say probable.

The second mistake consists of confounding this guilt so obtained with final judgment and eternal damnation; and this mistake has been erroneously attributed even to Calvin himself by one of our book writers, who tried inconsistently to make Calvin teach the doctrine of universal infant salvation. The inconsistency is not Calvin's. He really held neither of these positions, for he does not discuss at all the salvation or damnation of the infants of the heathen as a class, or of infants as a general class of humanity.

It may be granted that had God provided no salvation for the world the inference that guilt necessarily means final death would hold; but in view of the fact that a salvation has been provided, it is false and inconclusive reasoning. It simply shuts its eyes to the most important element of the problem, and asks everybody else to be equally blind. The anti-revisionists appear to conclude arbitrarily that Christ could not die for the salvation of heathen infants as well as for the balance of the world.

The idea of a limited atonement, or the exclusive application of the atonement to the elect only tends toward this same end, for who knows whether the dying infants of the heathen are elect, independently of Scripture teaching regarding infant salvation? This is another theological blunder which works hand in hand with the others. This teaching confounds Christ's work of atonement with salvation in fact, which is the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing to an acceptance of the atonement those (adults) who are capable of understanding the plan, and in producing the regeneration by which even those who die infants are similarly born again by God's almighty power.

The setting off of the infants of the heathen in the doubtful column is furthermore caused by the superior status of the children of the church. The promise to Abraham and his seed has been taken to apply to all the natural children, thus embracing all the children of the church in a promise of salvation to the exculsion of all others. This is an exegetical blunder which is in direct conflict with Paul's interpretation of that covenant. Paul tells us that the promise had reference to the spiritual children in its highest significance, rather than the natural seed. They were not all Israel who were of Israel as a people. Who knows then whether all the dying infants of the heathen may not have been embraced in that covenant, just as we are told that all believers among the Gentiles are so included? In proportion as we know, or have reason to believe, that they are saved we know that they are so included. They have been excluded upon a false theory, and if we know that all the children of the church dying infants are saved, it is not because we previously knew them to be partakers of the covenant of salvation, but because they are taken away before they come to years of discretion or responsibility, and this is precisely the same ground upon which we base a belief in the salvation of the dying infants of the heathen.

When these theological blunders are swept away the light of divine truth will shine out so clearly that there will be no longer any doubt about the salvation of all who are not able to apprehend the plan of salvation which God prepared for the world. We shall then cease to demand a knowledge of their election as a reason for a faith in their salvation. We shall see that we put the cart before the horse, and this will tend to clarify our ideas on the general subject of election. We shall see that as regards the personnel of the elect there is no difference whether we take the viewpoint of God in a past eternity or the viewpoint of the end, or during the present at any time we judge like the apostles the elect to be those who appear to be faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no conflict between the theoretical and the practical viewpoint, because God's knowledge is according to truth, and he sees the end from the beginning.

Let us proceed now to a study of the covenant of works.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

The covenant of works, so-called, has had a very wide influence upon our theology, affecting even the doctrine of the atonement itself. It unquestionably has had its influence in shaping men's conception of infant salvation and damnation. In view of a provided atonement for the world it seems impossible that the doctrine of infant damnation could have ever seemed to be possible or even rational, except for the teaching that men are held responsible for the sin of Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, not merely that they share by heredity the death which he induced in himself by his disobedience, but that men are initially guilty and consequentially corrupt. But this teaching is a great mistake. The

covenant of works, so-called in its theological conception, is a most unfortunate and far reaching blunder.

In Presbyterian circles it is pretty widely known that the covenant of works is rejected by Shedd. It is also rejected by Dr. Augustus H. Strong, of Rochester Seminary, a Baptist theologian, and by William B. Pope, of Manchester, England, a Methodist theologian. The present writer formed his own opinion before reading any of these authors, by his own independent study; in fact, he does not yet know how Shedd supports his contention, and as for the others, while they decidedly reject the covenant of works they make no argument directly against it. Some of our own theologians appear to be partly aware that the foundations of this covenant are insecure. Dabney, although he accepts it, begins his argument in favor of it by answering objections and his argument professes to be simply a statement of the points given in the standard authors.

Dr. Thornwell has acknowledged that it is not a legitimate conclusion from the narrative in the first chapter of Genesis, and he attempts to support it in other ways. He says, "It is true that Moses says nothing directly of a promise" made to Adam, and that "he gives no intimation of the nature of the reward which was promised to fidelity." He "does not even affirm that one was proposed." This being the case the question will occur, How do we know then that there was such a covenant? The answer must be, We do not know that God promised eternal life to Adam and his posterity upon a limited obedience. The inference has been inconclusively drawn from the words "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt (wilt) surely die." God had given the privilege of access to all the trees of the garden with this single exception. Adam was commanded not to eat of that fruit, and warned that a breach of the commandment meant death. It is commonly understood that the words are a threat, and the inference is drawn that if God threatened death for disobedience, he must have implied a promise of life for obedience. But a little inspection will show how much influence the imagination has been allowed in the shaping of the conception. In the first place, how do we know that this is a threat? We may read "thou wilt certainly die" (lit. dying thou wilt die) more justly than "thou shalt surely die." It is a simple future, and since "shall" is so largely used in the king James version even with the second and third persons, as a simple future, it is impossible to say that the translators so intended it. But this does away with the idea of the threat, and makes it a simple warning of the natural and inevitable result of the disobedience. There was no intrinsic danger in the fruit itself, but it stood as the symbol of evil, the symbol of disobedience, because it could not be touched except through a disregard of God's word and a breach of his positive command. And what God warned them of actually took place. They did not die physically in the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit, but they did die spiritually, and they knew it. They were aware of an immediate change in their

relations to God, and at once they became afraid of him. Now if there was no threat, but only a warning, how is it possible to draw the conclusion that God promised them eternal life for a limited obedience? Dr. Dabney says that the correlative of death is life. Yes, but the correlative of death is not eternal life. Nor is there a word said about a limited obedience, by which the promise of eternal life could be earned. Of course as God's creatures men were under the natural and necessary obligation of obedience, and they were bound to believe God who cannot lie. And yet they did disbelieve him, or at least Eve did, thus making him a liar, and they disobeyed his positive command, thus becoming rebels against his authority, and this without the slightest provocation.

There is no serious objection to the use of the word covenant in this connection, if it only means a dispensation of God's providence. This is clearly the idea of the Larger Catechism, but it is not the conception of the theologians, nor does it appear to satisfy the confessional statement in chapter seven, Par. 2.

The Larger Catechism (Q. 20), after speaking of man's creation, and circumstances in the garden of Eden, tells us that God entered into "a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death." If the tree of life stood as a pledge, God must have made an implied promise, but not of eternal life upon a limited obedience. On the other hand, the language "personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience," absolutely excludes the theological conception of that covenant. It was a covenant with man, it does not say with Adam; and it required personal obedience of all, and there was no limit because it was to be perpetual. This must have been simply a dispensation of natural law, and its nature is satisfactorily explained in Q. 93, where the moral law is described as the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in the performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man; promising life (not eternal life) upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it." This makes the matter perfectly clear that it was a dispensation of natural law, and God can be said to have "entered into" such a covenant only in the sense that he promised immunity so long as the obedience was maintained. This immunity is truly inferred from the threat, or warning concerning death, and this is all that can be justly inferred from the record.

Now if the Larger Catechism stood by itself, or if the confessional statement of chapter seven agreed with it, our interpretation on this question would be unassailable, but unfortunately the account of God's covenant with man, as it is given in chapter seven, seems irreconcilable with the statements of the Larger Catechism. The "covenant with man" becomes

transformed in that chapter into a covenant of works with Adam "wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." It will be observed that the word perpetual is not there, and the word personal is made very naturally to apply to Adam only, since it was in him that life was promised.

It seems fair to conclude from the wording that the committee which constructed the statement of the Confession proper must have been a different committee from that which drew up the statements of the Larger Catechism. And this is a historical fact. We turn to Q. 12 of the Shorter Catechism, and find that it is not sufficiently definite to be placed on one side or the other; it may be understood either way according to one's preconceived idea. In form it follows more closely the Larger Catechism, for the covenant is with man, and the clauses are parallel with that statement, although the absence of both "personal" and "perpetual" might be regarded as making it conform to the Confession. It looks like a compromise constructed to suit each of two irreconcilable parties.

It was with profound sorrow that the writer discovered this hopeless confusion in the Westminster standards. Alas, alas, if the covenant is the moulding idea of the Calvinistic theology, it follows a very uncertain guiding star. But the unbiased mind will easily distinguish between Calvinism, as the word stands for a system of Scripture truth, and certain errors which have crept into the Westminster Confession.

If the discovery of the irreconcilable difference between the Confession and the Larger Catechism will serve to show the subscribers of the Westminster Confession that that document, with all its excellence, is not perfect, there will be an important compensation for the sorrow which such discovery must produce. There has been too much a tendency to trust in man-made documents, and a feeling of undue satisfaction with the heritages of the past is exceedingly inimical to advancement in the present and the future. Let us not be content to let other people do our thinking for us, but ever be mindful of the fact that we are called upon to do our own thinking, and are responsible for our own conclusions. The tendency to accept perviously constructed statements without question will account for a number of the long standing errors of theology.

This so-called covenant becomes the fountain-head of that hurtful theory of immediate imputation, which has played such an important part in the contentions of Arminianism and Calvinism.

Let us now see what the theologians have to say about this covenant. Dr. Chas. Hodge (p. 117) starts out by giving the Shorter Catechism statement, coupled with a part of answer ten. He says, however, that "this statement does not rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures," although it is to be taken as a "concise and correct mode of asserting a plain scriptural fact, namely, that God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty." This is all that is meant by the term covenant, he says.

He tells us that the word itself is nowhere in Scripture applied to this transaction, and yet he endeavors to justify this extra-scriptural use of the word by the claim that the New Covenant is spoken of in antithesis to this covenant, as well as to that of Sinai, without appearing to recognize that this is a pure assumption, and that the logic is a circle. How could it be used in antithesis to a covenant that did not exist, according to the Scripture use of the word? The antithesis is first assumed and then the covenant argued from the antithesis, when the antithesis must depend upon the prior assumption that the Eden transaction was a covenant. The new covenant, he says, is "new not merely in antithesis to that made at Sinai, but new in reference to all legal covenants whatever"; he therefore thinks it "plain that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with Adam as a truly federal transaction."

It will be seen that the antithesis to the covenant of works is gotten in under a general statement concerning "legal covenants." This term as descriptive of the Eden transaction embodies a most serious error, namely, that God more than once proposed the law as a method of salvation. This is a most serious misinterpretation of the Sinai covenant, and besides the classing of a transaction before the fall with one after the fall is not to be justified by simply saying that they were legal. The fact remains that in Scripture the term covenant is definitely applied to the one and is not applied to the other. The classification fails to take any account of the difference in the situation of man in the two cases. The one was with man unfallen, and the other with man fallen and sinful.

This sort of reasoning will not stand the test of a moment's examination. It tacitly assumes what has just before been excluded by definition when it was said that the so-called covenant of works is only a promise suspended upon a condition. If this is all that is meant, by what species of logic is it classed with the Sinai covenant? Before such classification can be made, it is necessary to inquire, What promise and what condition? It is tacitly assumed that the promise of life means eternal life. But this could not be, if life was promised to perpetual obedience, as the larger catechism puts it. What condition? A limited obedience? And Adam's obedience for the race, and his righteousness to be credited to them? Let it be recognized that to argue the covenant of works in its theological conception from the Scripture use of the phrase "new covenant" is just as far from conclusive as anything can be. If the covenant of works is constructed out of this sort of gossamer web, the sooner it is swept away the better. It is assumed that all legal covenants are covenants of salvation.

But the bad logic is not the only thing bad in this presentation, perhaps the chief difficulty lies in the teaching that God did more than once (for the word is plural, "legal covenants") propose to man a scheme of salvation by law. Dr. Hodge says, "The Scriptures know nothing of any other than two methods of attaining eternal life; the one that which demands perfect obedience, and the other that which demands faith.

If the latter is called a covenant, the former is declared to be of the same nature."

By what right is it asserted that God ever did propose obedience to law as a scheme of salvation? If the assertion is grounded upon such a conception of the Sinai covenant, it is a gross misinterpretation of that covenant, and the whole of the Mosaic economy. God never did propose but one method of salvation, unless he did it in the covenant of works; but we failed to find it there.

Dr. Hodge says, "It is of great importance that the scriptural form of presenting truth be retained." Would it not then be better to abandon even the word covenant as a description of the unique position of Adam in the garden before the fall, because it is so liable to mislead. As a dispensation of God's providence it was entirely different from the plan of redemption which he has been working out ever since. There is not the slightest evidence that God's glorious plan of salvation in Christ is simply a patched up scheme to take the place of a previous plan of salvation by law which failed. It is an insult to the intelligence of the omnipotent God to teach that he seriously proposed a scheme of salvation which he knew could not work at all. The Larger Catechism has given us the truth on this subject, let us hold to it, and correct what is out of harmony with it; and let us abandon even the word as a description of a dispensation of pure law, since it finds no parallel even in the general use of "covenant," according to which (in the phrase "covenant of grace") it covers the whole dispensation of the plan of redemption.

According to the true view of the matter there was no condition of a covenant implied in God's words, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou wilt certainly die." Of course, if Adam did not die, he would live, it required no promise to give assurance of that. The fact of his creation was assurance of continued existence as long as he was sinless; but there is no possibility of constructing a promise of assured eternal life in righteousness out of this natural relation of the creature to the Creator. Dabney says the correlative of death is life; true, but the correlative of death is not eternal life. Death is naturally and necessarily eternal, unless God intervene to bring about a resurrection; but this is not true of life. Rather is it true that all life that is created must come to an end unless upheld by God the Creator. There can be no eternal life except that which God gives and secures. It seems therefore to be a mistake to find the condition of a covenant promise in Gen. 2:17.

Dr. Hodge asks the question "whether perpetual as well as perfect obedience was the condition of the covenant with Adam," and tells us that it is probably to be answered in the negative, but appears to be unmindful of the fact that this answer is inconsistent with the Larger Catechism. He says, "It seems to be reasonable in itself and plainly implied in the Scriptures that all rational creatures have a definite period of probation." But reason cannot supply the deficiency if revelation is

silent on the subject. There can be no data for reasoning on the matter, except what is found in the Scriptures. And if the case of the angels be made a basis for inference, it is against the supposition that God offered to the whole race of man eternal life upon the limited obedience of one man. Every angel had to stand for himself, and reason, as far as it can speak on the subject, would pronounce this the just course. To hold a man responsible for another's sin is repugnant to man's innate sense of justice, and to reward one man for what has been done by another is about as contrary to reason as the other. If man is held criminally responsible for Adam's individual act, there ought to be a clear statement of Scripture to prove it; but this statement cannot be produced; the single passage in Romans which has been supposed to assert it is a gross mistranslation. Rom. 5, 12.

Under the heading, "Parties to the Covenant of Works," Dr. Hodge argues that "the parties to the original covenant were God and Adam," since Adam was the representative of the whole race. This, he thinks, sustains the assertion that "everything said to him had as much reference to his posterity as to Adam himself. But this is a groundless assumption, if anything more is meant than that his fall would affect his posterity. There is nothing to show that Adam's sustained righteousness for a certain time would have been credited to his posterity. If he had had a child before his fall, of course that child would have inherited the same holy nature, but to say that it would be exempt from a personal test of that righteousness is not to be assumed without proof.

Dr. Hodge says the Jews inferred the representative character of Adam from the record in Genesis. But did they infer the covenant headship for which Dr. Hodge contends? If they did, their inference is worth no more than his own. Adam was necessarily a representative, inasmuch as he was to be the progenitor of the race, but any other representation needs proof. Dr. Hodge understands Paul to say that "the sentence of condemnation passed on all men for one offense," but this is not what Paul says; and if it is not found in the fifth chapter of Romans it is nowhere to be found. The impression that Paul said it is due to mistranslation. What he does say is, that death passed through unto all men, whereupon (*epi ho*, "upon which") all sinned, so that through one that sinned the judgment came or resulted unto condemnation. Of course then it is a mistake to say, "This great fact (meaning Adam's representative character) is made the ground on which the whole plan of redemption is founded." The conception of Christ's representative character as the same as that of Adam is something which the Scripture nowhere asserts, as the famous passages in 1 Cor. 15 and Rom. 5 go to show. But upon the understanding that they are the same Dr. Hodge argues that "to deny the principle in the one case is to deny it in the other," p. 121. He even goes so far as to say that the "principle involved in the headship of Adam underlies all the religious institutions ever ordained by God for men. * * * It is therefore one of the

fundamental principles (he says) both of natural and of revealed religion."

In opposition to this statement it may be said that covenant headship, so far from being a fundamental principle cannot be shown to be a principle at all, or to have anything to do with the atonement. Christ becomes a representative of his people, it is true, but not therefore a covenant head, he is their ransom, who brings them rescue from death not by what he covenanted but by what he did.

Dr. A. A. Hodge adds nothing to the argument, but rather confuses the issue by trying to make the idea of natural moral obligation pass for a covenant. By way of explaining the "contracting parties" he gives this account: (1) God, the moral Governor, by necessity of nature and relation demanding perfect conformity to the moral law. (2) Adam the free moral agent, by necessity of nature and relation under the inalienable obligations of moral law." This account of the relations is correct; the trouble is, the covenant is thus made to take its origin from a necessity of nature; in other words, the natural moral relation is erected into a covenant. There would be no objection to this in the sense in which the Larger Catechism describes this covenant, but it is not satisfactory proof of the existence of "contracting parties" to a covenant defined as a reciprocal promise. It is about as easy to say that Adam contracted with reference to his creation before he had an existence. If this was physically impossible, the other seems morally impossible, that is to say, it is morally impossible that God and man should have contracted in reference to something that was already and necessarily a finished fact. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it why hast thou made me thus?" But the real difficulty lies in the ambiguity of the word "covenant," by which an easy transition is made from the one meaning to the other without perceiving that the word is thus made to stand for totally different ideas. A dispensation of pure law is turned into a conditional promise in which the condition is limited obedience, and the promised reward eternal life.

If any one doubts that this is really the process, he has only to refer to Dr. Hodge's own language in which he explains the condition of the covenant to be "the promises of life and favor. Matt. 19, 15, 17; Gal. 3, 12."

A reference to the passages will serve to show that "the promises of life and favor" are understood to be eternal life. The citations imply false interpretations of both passages, which apparently makes them nothing less than a gross misconception and misinterpretation of the whole Old Testament economy. But since Dr. Thornwell has entered into this subject at length, while yielding the other points, it is best to reserve further examination of this point until we hear what he has to say.

Dr. Dabney's inference from the supposed threat in Genesis 2 has been already noticed in a cursory way, but it deserves a more careful attention. His argument is this: "That the promise of life was clearly

implied is shown by the fact itself, that life is the correlative of death, which was threatened in the covenant." But the correlative of death is not eternal life, which means a condition of indefectible holiness. If Adam had not died he would have lived, that is plain, but that he would have secured eternal life, an indefectible state, by a limited obedience is by no means indicated. Death is naturally and necessarily eternal, in itself considered, but not so with life. Nor will it do to argue that because death is naturally eternal, therefore its correlative must be eternal life. It would not follow if God had threatened eternal death for disobedience; but God did not threaten eternal death as the result of eating the forbidden fruit, for he had plans for robbing death of its prey, and of bringing eternal life out of death.

Dr. Thornwell was more perspicacious than the other theologians when he perceived that a promise could not justly be inferred from a threat. He says, "Unless the Scriptures directly or indirectly authenticate the promise, we are not to presume that the promise was made. I am willing to admit," he says, "that nothing can be inferred from the threatening. We cannot deduce one contrary from another. The sole promise involved in a threatening is impunity as long as the threatening is respected." He might have gone further and pointed out that even the threat itself is an uncertain inference from the language used, but his admission goes far enough to destroy the very foundation of the covenant of works, as it is conceived by himself and other theologians.

Dabney argues again from the law of conscience, which "expects life for obedience, as death for transgression." But does the natural law of conscience teach us to expect eternal life as the result of a limited obedience? No, indeed. Let Thornwell answer: "The sole promise involved in a threatening is impunity as long as the threatening is respected." Conscience gives us nothing except a judgment of what is right and what is wrong, with the corresponding sense of obligation to do the right and refrain from doing the wrong.

The same remark applies to the next point: "During his rectitude Adam evidently enjoyed the use of the 'tree of life' which was a sacramental pledge to him of the promised result. And when the covenant was broken his partaking of this seal was forbidden, as utterly inconsistent with the new state of things. Unless Adam had had before him the promise of life for obedience this would have been idle."

But no one denies that he had a promise of life as long, as he obeyed, and to make the tree of life stand for more than this, a symbol of life during obedience, is pure presumption; indeed it is a presumption based upon the prior presumption that a promise of eternal life was made, for otherwise how could it be the seal of such a promise? Thus it is seen that the argument is a circle, and begs the question by assuming the thing to be proved. To designate the symbol of the tree of life as a sacrament is simply an embodiment of this argument for it is nowhere called a sacrament. God drove man out of the garden lest he

deceive himself with reference to that symbol, as the devil had already deceived him with reference to the symbol of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but it was not because there was any natural efficacy in the tree itself, but to prevent Adam from resting upon false hopes. It is impossible to evolve truth out of the devil's lie. If it had really been a sacrament representing a provided salvation for the sinner, there seems no reason why he might not still have had access to it. But the incongruity of making it such a sign is manifest. How could it represent a salvation from death before death entered into the world? To call the tree of life a sacrament is an abuse of language which springs out of the broad sense in which the old fathers used the word.

The next point is the parallel between Adam and Christ, which there is no need to dwell upon, because we have already seen that the supposed parallel is a misconception. It supposes that Christ simply undertook what Adam failed to accomplish, but this is disproved by the contrast drawn between the two in the fifth chapter of Romans. To argue that Adam must have stood for eternal life for himself and his descendants, for the reason that Christ has brought eternal life is as baseless as the fabric of a dream.

Thornwell, who so freely acknowledged the invalidity of the argument from contraries at another point, thinks the argument from the representative character of Adam is solid. He says, "It is morally certain that a peculiar promise of some sort must have been given, depending upon a limited obedience, from the circumstance that Adam was made a representative of the race. He could not have been treated as a public person, and yet placed under a law of perpetual obedience." Let us pause just here and ask, How do we know? In what respect was he a public person? We are told that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin;" that "through one man's disobedience many were made sinners," but we are nowhere told that by obedience Adam would have rendered his seed indefectible. But Dr. Thornwell takes it for granted that this would have been the result. He says that to suppose him placed under a law of perpetual obedience (which, by the way, the Larger Catechism tells us to have been the fact) "were to suppose the monstrous anomaly that his descendants might have successively come into being, and yet without being justified have been exempt from the possibility of sin; or in case of sin have been exempt from the penalty of transgression." This is certainly interesting, but the predicament which is here represented makes one think that the theologians when they come to deal with this question have short memories. He starts out to explain what would be the condition under a state of natural law, and comes back on the same old track, supposing that Adam's descendants must have been promised indefectibility upon Adam's limited obedience. A condition of natural law is converted into a covenant of works. Verily there is something fatal about this question, it is enchanted ground, and to wander about

in it has the same effect as drinking of the waters of Lethe. The suggested monstrous condition is purely imaginary. If Adam had been placed in a condition of natural law which required perpetual obedience and he had had a child born in his estate of innocence, would he not have been in precisely Adam's condition? The supposition of indefectibility without justification results from contradictory suppositions.

The discussion of this question presents the most striking illustration of the power of prejudice. The persistence of the idea of the covenant of works is something marvelous. Adam it is argued "could not have been treated as a public person, and yet placed under a law of perpetual obedience." The answer is, No, not if it be assumed beforehand that the public character of Adam was that of a representative or covenant head under the covenant of works as ordinarily conceived. The rejected supposition is just what the Larger Catechism asserts in two places to have been the fact.

Again, it is said, "if there were no limit to his probation, he never could be justified." But where is it said that God expected him to be justified by his own righteousness? This is the very point at issue, and imagination cannot be relied upon to make a solid argument.

THE MOSAIC COVENANT.

We come now to that interpretation of the Mosaic system which is supposed to give support to the theory of a covenant of works. We have already seen it alluded to in the discussions of Chas. Hodge and A. A. Hodge, but it is also found in Dabney, and is especially depended upon by Thornwell, who puts the matter thus: "I maintain that the Scriptures indirectly teach us that there must have been a promise, and positively declare what the promise was." This appears almost self-contradictory, for if the Scriptures positively declare what the promise was, why say that they indirectly teach that there must have been a promise? The quotations show what is meant: "the law—that is the law given upon Sinai—"was ordained unto life." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." "Who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory honor and immortality, eternal life."

Now in the first place it would not be conclusive to apply the passages which have a clear reference to the law of Moses to the covenant of works, even in its aspect of a regime of natural law, unless it can be shown that the law of Moses was such a dispensation of law, which must suppose it to be a scheme of redemption by law. But this is not merely a gross misinterpretation of the Scripture, it is contradictory of its positive assertions. The supposition that the Mosaic law is the old covenant of works, or dispensation of law, renewed, is a supposition of extreme violence, for it supposes that God proposed the same plan to fallen man which he had (supposedly) proposed to man unfallen. It is a gross misinterpretation of the covenant with Israel.

In examining Dr. Thornwell's proof texts, let us take first Rom. 2: 6, 7, a passage upon which he lays great stress. He says, "This passage is decisive, as its design is evidently to show the nature of the dispensation under which man was placed in innocency, as preparatory to a just apprehension of the gospel. The promise of eternal life is no part of the law as such. It is peculiar to it by virtue of the limited probation upon which man was placed. The law of creation was life during the period of obedience, and eternal life could only be the reward of eternal obedience, but the law as modified by grace was patient continuance in well-doing for a season, and this for everlasting security and bliss. This was the law under which all men were placed in Adam; this the promise explicitly announced to them as the incentive to fidelity." Dr. Thornwell seems to think that the application of this passage to the case in hand is so plain that it needs no exposition. But an examination of the passage in the light of its context serves to show that it is a total misconception of it to make it have any reference to a dispensation of law, much less to man's condition in his estate of innocence. The passage speaks of something which will take place "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," in other words, in the day of judgment. The passage cited announces a principle of judgment, which was to be "rendered to every man according to his works." This does not mean that works were to be the ground of justification, for the judgment is "according to my gospel." It is true men are to be judged in accordance with their characters, for God's saved people will by "patience in well doing seek for glory, honor and incorruption"; but not as the means of attaining salvation, but pursuing salvation itself in its subjective aspect; while the wicked will infallibly manifest a factious or rebellious spirit, as manifested by their disobedience, and their preference for unrighteousness. Since evangelical obedience cannot be the ground of salvation, there is no probation in the passage, in the sense supposed. Nor is this probation, of whatever nature, a limited probation, making it parallel with a limited probation of Adam, nor does it furnish any basis for the supposition of such an arrangement. This probation ends only with death or the judgment. Adam's probation is supposed to be necessarily short, for if continued beyond the birth of his first child, according to Thornwell, the monstrous condition of unjustified indefectibility must have been the result. Thornwell then misinterprets the passage when he says it describes "the law under which all men were placed in Adam." Hodge in his commentary appears to make the same mistake when he makes the passage teach that "the ground of the judgment of God is the works of men, not their relations or professions." God will render to every one, Jew as well as Gentile, according to his works in opposition to any other ground of judgment." Just below he tells us that the righteous seek glory honor and immortality "by well doing, by the persevering performance of all duty." Under verse 10: "This is the ground of decision with respect to all, because God is perfectly impartial."

V. 12: "The ground of judgment is their works, the standard of judgment is their knowledge."

It would seem that the word "ground" must be intended to express something different from what Dr. Thornwell probably takes the passage to mean, after all, for he says under verse 13: when Paul says the doers of the law shall be justified, he is of course not to be understood as teaching contrary to his repeated declarations and arguments that men are actually to be justified by obedience to the law. He is speaking not of the method of justification available for sinners, but of the principles on which all who are out of Christ are to be judged." This last statement saves Hodge's orthodoxy, but it hardly justifies his use of language. The phrases "ground of decision" and "ground of judgment" (vs. 6, 12) are evidently misleading, and it is not surprising that Thornwell perhaps and others should have been misled by them. The last sentence quoted (v. 13) shows that Hodge is himself not clear on the matter. Why does he emphasize the fact that the verse has reference to those who are out of Christ? Did he not tell us under v. 10 that this same "ground of decision" had respect to all; and if this phrase does not mean cause for justification or condemnation what does it mean? It would not be easy to establish a distinction between the phrases "worketh good" and "doers of the law" (vs. 10, 13) and yet Hodge makes one apply to all, and the other to a particular class of men. If these phrases announce a principle of judgment, must it not be a principle which applies equally to all, seeing that the apostle applies it both to the righteous and the wicked?

The trouble seems to be in the interpretation of the phrase "according to his works" (v. 6), which is the key to the whole passage. This does not mean that works are the ground of judgment, but that judgment is to be in both cases in accordance with men's characters as evinced by their works. This is very different from saying that the righteous are justified by law. There is a sense in which "the doers of law" (not the law, as in the A. V.) are justified by law, but it simply shows that law cannot condemn as long as obedience is rendered. See James 2: 21, 24, 25. But this conception is purely abstract on the part of the apostle and lends no excuse for constructing a scheme of salvation by law. Law promises nothing but immunity for obedience; after we have done all we are unprofitable servants (Luke 17); we have simply done what it was our duty to do. Jesus does not mean to say, any more than the apostle, that any mere man ever did do his whole duty, but simply to explain the condition of a person under a dispensation of pure law; and the purpose of both is the same, viz.: to show that it is impossible for man to save himself by law. This is not God's plan at all. Under a sense of the extreme difficulty of human nature to measure up to the requirement of forgiveness which Jesus had laid down, the disciples cry, Lord increase our faith; and the Saviour in this connection teaches them that we are not saved by law. Who then can show that the scheme of salvation by law was ever proposed, even to Adam in his

estate of innocence? The other passages which are quoted in support of the theory of salvation by law are equally beside the mark, and as interpreted they make both Paul and the Saviour contradict themselves.

Thornwell's next quotation is from Rom. 7: 10; 8: 3. "And the command which was ordained unto life, this I found to be unto death." "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." etc. "This passage teaches unequivocally" he says, "that the law proposed a scheme of justification; a scheme by virtue of which men could be reputed not merely innocent, but righteous; and that the reason why eternal life has not been secured by it is not the inadequacy of its own promise, but the failure of man to comply with the condition. No candid man," he says, "can weigh these texts without being impressed with the conviction that Paul thinks of man as having been placed in a state in which he might have secured everlasting life by a temporary obedience."

It is a matter of satisfaction that this advocate of the covenant of works gives in such unequivocal language his interpretation of the Mosaic law, upon which he seeks to establish the covenant of works. Its purpose is manifest, and it forces the reflection, how completely can a man be blinded by a theory, and how easy it is to warp Scripture when going in search of passages to support a pet theory; and others are in the same boat. It is refreshing to see that Thornwell sees the issue so clearly, and undertakes to meet it so fairly. His idea is that if the Mosaic law placed man in a state in which he might have secured everlasting life by a temporary obedience, then the promise of eternal life to a temporary obedience in Eden is established.

Before discussing the question as to what we are to get out of his quotations, let us inspect the logic by which Thornwell brings to bear his own interpretations. It is simply this, If God gave a law, or made a covenant on Sinai which offered eternal life upon condition of a limited obedience, he must have offered to Adam eternal life upon a limited obedience. Does this appear to be conclusive? The law of Moses was given in connection with a covenant which is perfectly definite, and can be easily studied. It was a special arrangement with Israel as God's national church, and absolute obedience to the moral law was not expected, but a scheme of forgiveness was provided. The reasoning fails to take into account the different conditions of the parties. We need not ask, Why should God have proposed a scheme to Israel which failed in Adam, we are not ready for that yet, but let us ask, Why seek support for a scheme in Eden which if made at all to Israel certainly failed absolutely? Will any one say, But Adam was holy, and able to render obedience? The answer is, But Adam was a creature of finite powers, and stood very little better showing than sinful Israel, and God must have known beforehand that Adam would fail, without taking into consideration the question of a limit placed to his probation. Does it comport very well with our ideas of infinite

wisdom that God seriously proposed a scheme of salvation to Adam which he knew was doomed to certain failure? What is gained by such a supposition? Was Adam and the race in any better condition actually, than they would have been in an estate of natural law? It would seem not, in view of the fact that no single soul reaped any benefit from such scheme, if it was proposed.

But it injures our idea of God's wisdom to hold that he proposed a scheme which was foredoomed to absolute failure. It injures our idea of the glorious plan of redemption to hold that it is simply the patching up of a plan that failed in Adam. It does not add to the dignity and glory of our Lord and Saviour to hold that he simply undertook what was proposed to a mere man. Why then this covenant of works offering eternal life upon a limited obedience? If so important a covenant was made as the original scheme of God's salvation for man, there ought to be some record of it, and we should not be left to argue from a dispensation of God's providence after the fall to a dispensation of his providence before the fall.

The limit to the probation is so important an element that there should be a record of it, but there is absolutely none. It cannot even be shown to have existed in the Mosaic covenant, so there is not the slightest starting point for the flimsy logic by which it is projected into the dawn of creation. This is a most important point, by the way, against that theory of Christ's work of atonement which teaches that he purchased eternal life for his people by a limited obedience to law. Paul had the idea of salvation by law before his conversion. But it passed away with the superior knowledge of the divine illumination by which he passed from Judaism into the gospel light. When says, "I was alive apart from the law once," he does not mean that he was better before his enlightened knowledge than he was after. He evidently means that he was righteous in his own apprehension, and must have thought that he was earning salvation by his obedience, but when the commandment came home to him in its spiritual meaning "sin revived" in the sense that it became at once apparent. He then discovered that all his righteousness was filthy rags, and his former hope of saving himself by law a delusion; the law could bring him nothing but death.

This is a different idea truly from the above conception. That idea of the law was Paul's conception before his mind was enlightened, and it was the teaching of a spurious Judaism, which having rejected the Saviour to whom all their own forms and ceremonies pointed, fastened upon the husks of the moral law as a scheme of righteousness.

No more serious indictment can be brought against it than to say that it brings about a false interpretation of the Mosaic economy—unless it be the separate imputation of Christ's active obedience which casts a blight upon the atonement itself by introducing a confusing and contradictory element to account for man's "award" of eternal life.

There are other passages which need to be noticed in this connection,

viz. Christ's answer to the lawyer, "This do and thou shalt live" (Lk. 10, 25), and the other to the young man, who came inquiring the way of life, to whom the Saviour answered, "If thou wouldst enter into life keep the commandments." Matt. 19, 16, Mk. 10, 17, Lk. 18, 18.

In the first of these passages Christ draws out from the man himself the summary of the law, and after commending his answer tells him, This do and thou shalt live; and immediately proceeds to give the parable of the good Samaritan to answer his question, And who is my neighbor? The point for us is, What did Christ mean by saying, This do and thou shalt live? If he meant keep the law perfectly and you will merit eternal life, his illustration of the meaning of the law was such as to show the impossibility of completely fulfilling the condition. He must have meant simply to direct his inquirer to the true answer to his own question, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Eternal life must be taken in its subjective meaning, of the practical christian life, and then the parable would be illustrative of that life as it expresses itself in the law of love.

Whether this be the meaning or not, this seems to be his meaning in Matt 19, 17, despite the fact that the question is, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Saviour's first answer seems to intimate that the young man doesn't ask his question in exactly the right way. Whether he says, Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good, or Why callest thou me good, or put in both forms, it matters not, the purpose is the same, and most likely the answers were given together, Matthew giving one form and Mark and Luke the other. "Why callest thou me good; and why askest thou me concerning goodness? Implying that the question is not an intelligent one in the form put, because none but God is really good, i. e., perfectly righteous. But he proceeds to answer a question put by an honest and yearning heart by giving directions concerning the practical christian life, at the same time putting his finger upon the weak point in this young man's character; and despite the weakness the Saviour recognizing his sincerity looked upon him and loved him. It would be a monstrous perversion of the Saviour's first answer to take it as directing him to keep the commandments as a method of salvation. Such an interpretation does not comport with the latter part of the incident in which he gave this young man a lesson similar to that conveyed by the parable of the good Samaritan.

All such false interpretations should be decidedly rejected, and the whole Scripture brought into harmony with itself by recognizing that the method of salvation was the same in the Old Testament as in the New, viz. "The righteous shall live by his faith." To make the Mosaic code a scheme of pure law is a gross misinterpretation. The moral law did not constitute the whole of that code by any means; the covenant on Sinai embraced the "Judgments" as well, in other words, the whole of the Symbolic Jewish ritual, which presented Christ's salvation

in type. The moral law never could do anything but condemn sinful creatures in its judgments, and was never given for justification. See Gal. 3, 21, 22.

Seeing that this sweeps away the last vestige of the foundation constructed for the covenant of works, considered as a promise of eternal life upon a limited obedience, it should be buried beyond the possibility of a resurrection. Let the gospel narrative be taken just as it is without imaginary addition. It is a matter for congratulation that the Larger Catechism has seized and chystalized the truth on this subject; but it would have been better to have avoided altogether the word "covenant" as descriptive of a regime of pure law. The statements of the Confession and Shorter Catechism should by all means be so modified as to bring them into harmony with the teaching of the Larger Catechism on this subject.

The discussion of the subject of the "covenant of works" brings us by a natural transition to the discussion of Original Sin, and that view of it which is expressed in the doctrine of Immediate Imputation.

ORIGINAL SIN.

The doctrine of Original Sin has suffered from the deadly blight produced by the theory of a covenant of works, the effects of which are not peculiar either to Calvinism or to Arminianism. The doctrine of Immediate Imputation which is a necessary corollary of that theory has had its effect upon both types of theology. It is not uncommon to hear Calvinists charge Wesleyans, under the general name Arminians with being unsound on the doctrine of original sin. The charge is not just of the followers of Wesley and Watson. They accept the doctrine of original sin, but they differ in the device which they introduce for neutralizing or remedying the effects of the doctrine of Immediate Imputation. They admit just as clearly as the Calvinist that the descendants of Adam and Eve, after their fall, were born without original righteousness, and were not merely corrupt but guilty. Now it is obviously unfair to hold Methodists responsible for the views of Whitby and the lower Arminians, which they repudiate, by simply putting them in the broad class of Arminians. There is no more justice in this than it would be for a Methodist to charge upon all Calvinists indiscriminately the doctrine of Immediate Imputation, which teaches that all Adam's descendants were held individually guilty of Adam's act in eating the forbidden fruit. All Calvinists do not teach this by any means. Dabney denies that it was the view of Calvin himself or of the body of the Reformed divines.

Dabney very properly makes a clear distinction between the followers of Whitby and Wesley. The former seem to have held a semi-Pelagianism which the latter have always rejected. Watson himself protests against being classed with Whitby. Before giving his language it may be well to inquire what Whitby believed. Dabney gives a brief

statement thus: Whitby and his followers "admit that Adam and his race were both much injured by the fall. He has not indeed lost his equilibrium of will for spiritual good, but he has become greatly alienated from God, has fallen under the penal curse of physical death, has become more animal, so that concupiscence is greatly exasperated, and is more prone to break out into actual transgression." Theol. p. 316. If this statement is correct, even Arminians of this type believe in original sin, since the state of fallen man was a sinful one, not one of moral indifference. It should be noticed that he has according to this "fallen under the penal curse of physical evil and death." The words "physical evil and death" may appear to have a Pelagian ring, but if it were not a state of sin, how could they fall under a penal curse; and yet the last sentence of the above statement appears to exclude that covenant: "This is the state to which Adam reduced himself; and his posterity share it, not in virtue of any federal relation, or imputation of Adam's guilt, but of that universal physical law that like must generate like." Whether the implied contradiction of this statement is Whitby's own, or is to be attributed to inadvertence in the statement of his views, cannot here be decided, but this much seems clear, if he rejected the covenant of works, he was right in so doing, and his error consists not in that rejection but in his tendency to Pelagianism, that is, his tendency to modify or deny the real sinfulness of man's estate by reason of the fall.

"The Wesleyans," says Dabney, "begin by admitting all that a moderate Calvinist would ask, as to Adam's loss of original righteousness in the fall, bondage under evil desires, and total depravity. While they misinterpret and then reject the question between mediate and immediate imputation." In passing it may be observed that inasmuch as Dabney himself, in his review of Hodge's Theology, interprets and then rejects the distinction between mediate and immediate imputation, it is not easy to understand what this means. However, he tells us that they "retain the orthodox idea of imputation, admitting that the legal consequences of Adam's act are visited upon his descendants along with himself." The distinction which he draws between them and Whitby does not seem clear on this point, inasmuch as the "penal curse of physical evil and death" (Whitby) is certainly one of the "legal consequences supposed to have followed from Adam's act" (Wesleyan). The point is that in neither case is there a denial of the sinfulness and guilt of man's situation.

The next point is entirely a different question: "But then," he says, "they say the objections of severity and unrighteousness urged against this plan could not be met, unless it be considered as a whole embracing man's gracious connection with the second Adam. By the covenant of grace in him, the self-determining power of the will, and ability of will are purchased back for every member of the human family and actually communicated by common sufficient grace to all, so far repairing the effects of the fall that man has moral ability for spiritual good, if he

chooses to employ it." Dabney's comment is, "Thus while they give us the true doctrine with one hand, they take it back with the other, and teach a semi-Pelagian result." This comment seems to be not just, for it confounds the question of a remedy for man's inherited sinful condition with the condition itself. Surely the disease and the remedy are different things. But before discussing the Wesleyan view let us hear Watson himself. In repelling certain misrepresentations of the Wesleyan position Watson says, "That this is a very defective view of the effects of the original offense upon Adam and his descendants must be acknowledged, . . . that the corruption of our nature, and not merely its greater liability to be corrupted, is the doctrine of Scripture will presently be shown." (45) He defends Arminius himself from the semi-Pelagian views attributed to him, quoting him directly to show that these were not his views, and says, "such views are not the opinion of the large body of the followers of Wesley, but are traceable to Dr. Whitby, and several divines of the English Church." But the fact that Wesleyan Methodists have so often been held responsible for views which they do not teach shows, he says, "how little pains many divines of the Calvinistic school have taken to understand the opinions which they have hastily condemned in mass."

He quotes Arminius thus: "The immediate and proper effect of this sin was, God was offended by it . . . from which he conceives a just wrath, which is the second effect of sin. But this wrath is followed by the infliction of punishment, which is here twofold: 1. A liability to both deaths. (Rom. 6, 23). 2. Deprivation of that primeval holiness and righteousness which because they were the effects of the Holy Spirit dwelling in man, ought not to remain in man who had fallen from the favor of God, and had incurred his anger. But the whole of this sin is not peculiar to our first parents, but is common to the whole race, and to all their posterity who at the time when the first sin was committed were in the loins, and who afterwards descended from them in the natural mode of propagation. . . . Whatever punishment therefore was inflicted on our first parents has also pervaded all their posterity."

It will be observed that this account of the transmission of sin does not differ from that of the Westminster Confession itself. It may be questioned however whether it is perfectly accurate to say, that "privation of primeval holiness and righteousness" was an element of the twofold infliction of punishment." How could it be, when it precedes the punishment, or constitutes its own punishment? God did not take away man's holiness or righteousness, he threw it away himself. Nor have we reason to believe that God deprived man entirely of his Holy Spirit at this juncture, which seems to be implied in the statement.

But after all, let us not be too severe on Arminius, especially as this is a doctrine held by Calvinists, and is just the opposite from the semi-Pelagianism which might have been expected. It is true that the

Confession does not make man's loss of righteousness an element of his punishment (Ch. 6, Par. 2), at least not by direct statement, but this is certainly the idea of the immediate imputation theologians, and it may be considered to be implied in Par. 3, which states that "the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all his posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." It may be that the framers of this statement did not intend to say that the conveying of the death was the result of the imputation; it may be intended simply to enumerate two separate and distinct effects; but it must be admitted that the interpretation which understands a causal relation between the two clauses is not an unnatural one. If there was an imputation of the individual act of Adam to his children, it seems natural to place this reckoning of guilt first, at least in the order of thought. This is exactly what Hodge contends for. Dabney criticises Hodge's Theology for teaching Immediate Imputation, with this very order of thought, on the ground that it does not comport with correct ideas of justice to place guilt before sin. And yet Dabney objects to the Wesleyan views when they contend in view of this immediate imputation that "the objections of severity and unrighteousness urged against this plan could not be met unless it be considered as one whole, embracing man's gracious connection with the second Adam." They simply apply Christ's work of atonement to all mankind, in such a way as to relieve the burden of immediate imputation, which holds men personally guilty of Adam's act. Dabney says, "The obvious objection to this scheme is, that if the effects of Adam's fall on his posterity are such that they would have been unjust if not repaired by a redeeming plan which was to follow it as a part of the same system, then God's act in giving a redeemer was not one of pure grace (as Scripture everywhere says) but he was under obligation to do some such thing." This objection carries little force when it is seen that it can be turned against him; for the injustice which Wesleyanism seeks to remedy is just that against which Dabney himself contends in Hodge. It is really an objection to the doctrine of a covenant of works, which by its action produces this anomaly, and yet Dabney contends for the covenant of works. If Wesley or Watson had perceived the truth and rejected the covenant of works, they would have had no need to introduce the device to which Dabney objects. If Watson after accepting the common theory afterwards tends to disregard it, and lays stress upon the transmission of sin by generation, he is by so much ahead of the Calvinist, who after accepting the theory attempts to carry it out to all its logical consequences.

Watson adheres to the statement of Isaac Watts, as being the least objectionable form of the doctrine of original sin, but it is a mistake to say that in doing so he teaches simply "that the result of Adam's sin flowed down to posterity because he was the universal father of mankind." Watson accepted the doctrine that Adam was a public person and head and representative of the human race," and cites Rom.

3 to show that "Adam and Christ are contrasted in their public or federal character, and the hurt which they have derived from the one, and the healing they have received from the other are also contrasted in various particulars."

Now he does not explain in what sense he uses the word "federal," but he does explain that it means more than mediate imputation, which he defines as "our mortality of body and the corruption of our moral nature, in virtue of our derivation from him." He concludes that this does not go far enough and quotes Dr. Watts as giving the correct view which teaches that the descendants of Adam incurred both the "guilt or liableness to punishment," and the corruption of nature, this statement limiting the guilt strictly to the legal aspect of the matter, and relieving the posterity of the moral ill desert of the act. The act was theirs only in its consequences. Nobody but a realist should feel disposed to object to this. It really covers the point for which Dr. Hodge contends, but it is wrong in so doing, and it is a pity that Watson did not out and out reject the covenant of works, and so consistently limit the representation to the law of genetic transmission, or what has been charged upon him as the "parental theory." Dr. Miley is quoted as saying that "the tendency is towards the recognition of this law as the sufficient and whole account of original sin"—who also attributes this view to Whedon. This tendency is unquestionably correct, in view of the fact that the covenant of works, as commonly understood, is a baseless theory. The rejection of it will relieve Wesleyan Arminianism of the necessity of putting out the theory to which Dabney objected, and this unscriptural addendum to the doctrine of universal atonement should be eliminated. When this is done one of the most serious criticisms of the system will be obviated. If then the Calvinistic Theology on its part clearly rejects the unscriptural theory of a covenant of works, the two systems will be on this point in perfect harmony.

There is a great deal of protest already, in Calvinistic circles, against the doctrine of immediate imputation which is simply the covenant of works under another name, and it will be interesting to see how such a theologian as Dabney contends against the one while at the same time holding to the other. Even a partial following up of the discussion among Calvinistic theologians will serve to show that utter confusion has been wrought in theology by this theory.

IMPUTATION.

Since there are several conflicting views on the subject of Imputation, we may naturally inquire, What does Imputation mean? It is hardly possible to give a consistent and intelligent definition. As Dabney explains, the Greek and Hebrew equivalents of the verb "impute" mean to think, then to judge, then to impute or attribute. This however gives a very imperfect conception, and the theologians have to define it by giving the various views as to the guilt and corruption which

Adam's sin brought into the world. There are different views of Imputation according as the guilt or the corruption of nature is supposed to precede in the order of thought, or whether they be made to coincide with Adam's original act, on the theory that all the race were really present and actually had a part in the act, and so are justly held responsible for that sin.

Now it is well to note the fact that the word "imputation" does not occur in our English Bibles. The word "impute" does occur several times, but in the Revised Version of the New Testament the Greek word is rendered by "reckon" in every case except one. This is an improvement in translation, for it is well to avoid a word which has been so much abused, and at best has become such an indefinite quantity. It is not easy to see why the revisers did not extend their otherwise uniform translation to the single passage, Rom. 5, 13, which stands as an exception; for there is no reason in the nature of the case why it should not be translated, "but sin is not reckoned." It is true there is a slight difference in the form of the Greek word but "reckon" stands as its first equivalent in the Lexicon. (See L. and S.)

In connection with the fact that the noun "imputation" is nowhere used, attention is called to the fact that Dabney acknowledges that even the verb is not used to assert that the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to us. He says, "Now we do not say that the Scriptures anywhere use the particular phrase, the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to us, but we claim that the truth is plainly implied in the transactions as they actually occurred, and is substantially taught in other parts of Scripture." Theol. p. 329. What does this mean? Why of course that he infers it from the covenant of works. The reader who has followed the discussion of the covenant of works will know how much value to assign to such proof. In another place he asserts that the covenant of works is grounded in the principle of imputation.

The question "whether anything is ever said in Scripture to be imputed to any other than its own agent" he does not discuss. In his view of imputation "it is not Adam's sin which is imputed to us but the guilt (obligation to punishment) of his first sin." But this seems to be a distinction without a difference, unless a man can be held guilty before he is sinful, and this he himself rejects.

Yet in his Theology, Dabney takes pains to draw this distinction, saying "This much misunderstood doctrine does not teach that Adam's act was actually made ours. This conscience repudiates. We know that we personally did not will it. Nor does it mean that we are to feel personally defiled and blameworthy, with the vileness and demerit of Adam's sin. For us to undertake to repent of it in this sense would be as preposterous as for us to feel self-complacency for the excellence of Christ's righteousness imputed to us." p. 329. But is it any more preposterous to say that sin itself is charged to us, than to say that the guilt is charged to us? What is guilt? Why, it is a relation to the law, but how can there be a relation without something to be related?

We read that "where there is no law there is no transgression," therefore sin (guilt) is not imputed (reckoned) where there is no law. This means no personal sin no guilt.

The apostle's argument in Rom. 5 is just the opposite from the distinction which is thus drawn between guilt and sin. Instead of teaching that man is held guilty of Adam's sin the apostle argues the universal sinfulness of mankind from the universal prevalence of death, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression. This teaches us, not that the babes thus alluded to were held guilty of Adam's act, but that the condition of spiritual death which they inherited was a condition of sin, and as such inimical to God's law and therefore guilty. They were guilty not of Adam's sin but of their own depravity, they were born sinners and therefore guilty. It amounts to little to make a fight on Immediate Imputation if after all we are held guilty of Adam's sin. It is inconsistent to reject immediate imputation while holding to the covenant of works.

Dabney correctly founded imputation upon that covenant. "We are so associated," he says, "with Adam in the legal consequences of sin which closed his probation and ours in his, that we are treated as he is, on account of his act." He makes the ground of the "legal union" so called two-fold, first, the natural union with him as the root of all mankind, second, the federal relation instituted in him by God's covenant with him." Although imputation is thus grounded upon the covenant of works, yet in his review of Hodge's theology Dabney asks whether the covenant of works and of grace are not both grounded in the principle of imputation, and answers, Yes. Col. Writ., Vol. 1, p. 262. But how can the covenant of works and imputation be respectively grounded upon each other?

There is no teaching of theology which has caused so much anxious thought, and so much metaphysical discussion in the vain attempts that have been made to explain the difficulties which are inseparably attached to the doctrine of a covenant of works.

Let us now hear Hodge's account of Imputation. It is this: "In virtue of the union, federal and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin, although not their act, is so imputed to them that it is the judicial ground of the penalty threatened against him coming also upon them." Vol. 2, p. 193. His formal explanation of immediate imputation is this: "Others, while they admit that a corrupt nature is derived from Adam by all his ordinary posterity, yet deny first, that this corruption or spiritual death is a penal infliction for sin; and second, that there is any imputation to Adam's descendants of the guilt of his first sin. All that is really imputed to them is their own inherent hereditary depravity. This is the doctrine of mediate imputation." "Others discard entirely the idea of imputation so far as Adam's sin is concerned, and refer the hereditary corruption of men to the general law of propagation. Throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms, like begets like."

These opinions as explained by Hodge are virtually the same, for those

who deny that corruption of nature is a penal infliction on account of Adam's first sin can offer no other explanation of it than that given above, namely, the law of heredity. Since Dabney teaches the imputation of the guilt, but not the sin, he will have to be put in a separate class, and since Watson makes this same distinction, with Watts, he and Dabney may be classed together.

Hodge mentions under his fourth head the realistic theory, which teaches that "as generic humanity existed whole and entire in the persons of Adam and Eve, their sin was the sin of the entire race." "We literally sinned in Adam, and consequently the guilt of that sin is our personal guilt, and the consequent corruption of nature is the effect of our own voluntary act." p. 193. According to Hodge, to impute is "to reckon to, or to lay to one's account," no matter whether it have reference to sin or righteousness, or whether it is our own personally, or the sin or righteousness of another. To impute sin, he says, is to impute the guilt of sin. This appears to bear out our criticism of Dabney, above made, that a distinction between imputation of sin and guilt is a distinction without a difference. But Hodge himself seems to make the same distinction for he says, "By guilt is meant not criminality or moral ill-desert, or demerit, much less moral pollution, but the judicial obligation to satisfy justice. Hence the evil consequent on the imputation is not an arbitrary infliction; not merely a misfortune or calamity, not a chastisement in the proper sense of that word, but a punishment, *e. i.* an evil inflicted in the execution of the penalty of law, and for the satisfaction of justice." p. 194. Thus Hodge defines imputation to be just what he conceives to have taken place under the covenant of works. Imputation brings punishment, for it is a legal sentence, but how a man can be punished for the deed of another in which he had no part whatever he has not explained.

He next explains that all imputation is the same, as admitted by all theologians, Reformed and Lutheran—Adam's sin to us, our sins to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to believers. As the first is seen to be improperly grounded in a false theory, so the other two are needless and unsupported suppositions. Where is it said that our sins were imputed or reckoned to Christ? Rather he paid a debt which he did not owe, and one who pays for another cannot be said to owe the debt in his own person, it is confusion. We read that for the transgression of my people was he stricken, but it does not say that he was counted a sinner, despite the fact that he "made his grave with the wicked;" on the other hand, we are distinctly told that "he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth." It is true that God laid on him the iniquity of us all, but it was as a spotless lamb that he bore it, and this is not the theory of imputation by a great deal.

And where is it said that his righteousness (holiness, active obedience) was imputed to us? Nowhere. We read that Abraham believed God and it (the faith) was "reckoned to him unto (eis) righteousness"; in other words, he was counted righteous on account of his faith not on account

of works, Rom. 4: 3. When it is said "the reward is not reckoned as of grace but of debt," the meaning is that it is in the nature of reward that it is considered a debt. Abraham's righteousness was in no sense a debt, but a free gift. Just below this righteousness is defined to be freedom from guilt, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." But this is very different from a reckoning or imputation of Christ's active obedience, which, means that his obedience to law is reckoned to the account of his people. Since nothing is taught in Scripture of the imputation of our sins to Christ, Hodge's explanation that such imputation does not mean that Christ actually committed our sins, or that he was morally criminal on account of them, is entirely superfluous; but if there were such a thing it would need explanation as much as the imputation of Adam's sin to his children. Hodge argues the imputation of Adam's sin from two assumed imputations which are equally groundless. Such is the maze of false paths into which the covenant of works introduces one.

The Scripture tells us that the righteousness which is reckoned to Abraham's children, both Jews and Gentiles, is the same as that reckoned to Abraham himself, viz., forgiveness of sins. Hodge thinks much of the difficulty on this subject arises from the ambiguity of the word "righteousness," but it needs only an examination of the Scripture passages where the matter of imputing is spoken of to convince one that there need be no difficulty on this score, for nowhere is the righteousness of Christ said to be imputed to us, or our sins said to be imputed to him. The difficulty of this subject is not found in the double meaning of "righteousness" according to which it sometimes means justification and sometimes sanctification, but it is rather to be found in the gratuitous meaning which has been read into the word "impute."

Let us examine those cases of the usage in the Old Testament, where the word still stands in the Revised Version, and it will be seen that in no case does it convey the idea of being held accountable for something different from what a person either is or does, except as such a thing is deprecated as unjust. For instance, in 1 Sam. 22: 15, Ahimelech deprecates being held responsible for something which he says he did not do. In 2 Sam. 19: 19, Shimei begs not to be held to account for something which he did do: "Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me," at the same time confessing his sin. Psalm 32, which celebrates the blessedness of forgiveness, furnishes no help to those who are in search for passages to support the justice of holding men responsible for something they did not do. In Lev. 7: 18, "impute" is interpreted in the same verse. It meant that the offering should not be accepted on the offerer's behalf, that is, he should not get credit for it. In this case the imputation accorded with the facts. So in Lev. 17: 4, "he hath shed blood"—"blood shall be imputed," which means he shall be held guilty of shedding blood, because he had actually shed blood. These are all the cases mentioned by Young in the Old Testament.

Coming to the New we find the single case where "impute" is allowed to stand, Rom. 5: 13, and this announces a principle of God's judgment

directly contrary to the doctrine of a covenant of works and the theory of immediate imputation: "Sin is not imputed where there is no law," which means simply what is asserted directly in Rom. 4: 15, that a body cannot be counted to have done that which he did not do (broken a law which did not exist). "Where there is no law, neither is there transgression," lit., where law is not neither is there transgression. A body must therefore have transgressed the law before he can possibly be held accountable for transgression, for it would be contrary to truth to hold him to account for something which he did not do. This contradicts the covenant of works and immediate imputation. This principle is laid down, as a settled principle of God's moral government, and man's moral judgments endorse it as just. The theory of a covenant of works and immediate imputation, which is simply the covenant in operation, must be given up, because it contravenes the eternal principles of God's truth and justice.

The passage in Rom. 4: 15, deals another death blow to the covenant of works, for it shows that what that theory advances is impossible, since it teaches that there could never be a scheme of salvation by law. The teaching that salvation is by law is subversive of the gospel by promise (v. 14), and the reason is, "law worketh wrath." Let it be noted that the idea of law is purely abstract, and that as such the article is omitted in verse 13: "For not through law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be the heir of the world." It cannot be that the law of Moses is referred to, for as that was 430 years later it could have no application to the case. This same abstract idea must be kept up in the following verses: For if they that are of law be heirs, faith is made void. If they are heirs by law (without the article) faith is made void. This truth applies just as well before the law of Moses was given as after it.

The article with law in the following clause is not an indication that the law of Moses is referred to, it is rather the law before mentioned, and is still the same abstract idea. "The law" just referred to in its abstract conception as a principle of the divine government "worketh wrath." It is impossible that it could work anything else in the case of creatures already fallen. But we may go further and say that it never could have done any better even in Eden, for the event proves it, and reason adds the truth that with man left to the exercise of his own finite powers it must ever have been so. There is no reason therefore why this truth may not have the force of a universal proposition: "law worketh wrath." This being so, salvation could never have been otherwise than by faith in God, as the God of our salvation. The clause which is found in connection with this, viz.: "Where law is not, neither is there transgression," goes to show that man is necessarily under law, even as it says in Ch. 5: 13, "up to the time of the law sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law," therefore, man was under law from the beginning, long before the law of Moses was heard of. The apostle alluded to the fact that infants shared in the death, which

shows them to have been sinful, and themselves amenable to the curse of the law. This completes the universality of the condition of death which one man brought into the world and upon which (*epi ho*) all sinned (v. 12). "For that all sinned" is a mistranslation which wantonly perverts two of the commonest Greek words, and the translation is to be traced to the Latin Vulgate rather than to the Greek, and has held its place by the law of prescription in spite of the Greek. See Meyer.

This is the only passage which gives the shadow of a foundation to immediate imputation, for the rendering "for that all sinned" is taken to mean that they sinned when Adam sinned, and so sinned in him. This is the rotten support which has served the purpose of bolstering up two of the theories connected with the covenant of works. The first is the theory of realism, which asserts that all mankind were personally present in Adam when he sinned, and so they sinned in him and are justly held accountable for an act which was common to him and to them. This is perhaps the vainest dream that the mind of man ever conceived, but it has a close second in the theory of immediate imputation, which teaches that men were not there personally, but all the same were treated as if they were there, since they are punished for Adam's act in eating the forbidden fruit. Alas, alas, what a commentary on the impotence of the human mind that two such awful dreams should have held their place in theology all along through the ages from the time of Augustine, who was the author of the first, and perhaps Tertullian, who has been credited with the second. Dabney says Tertullian originated the doctrine of immediate imputation but Augustus H. Strong says it was first broached by Cocceius. Well had it been for theology if these dreamers had not given out their vain imaginations to the world.

It will be observed that these various accounts of how sin and guilt come upon all mankind were constructed in order to answer the question of the equity in the case. How can man be justly held accountable for Adam's sin? In their eagerness to shed light on this difficult question the theologians have evidently forgotten to examine the foundations upon which so remarkable a proposition rests. Starting out with the assumed doctrine that man is in fact held accountable for Adam's act, the theologians have strained their wits to account for the doctrine, not recognizing that the doctrine itself is not founded upon Scripture. The realist is so badly pressed by this question that he takes refuge in an explanation which offends all sound reason and common sense, almost obliterating the distinction of personality in man, and verging dangerously near to pantheism. If the race can have their personality merged into that of Adam, it is an easy step to merging Adam's personality into that of the Creator himself. Some who even reject the covenant of works hold on to this pernicious theory, for instance Shedd and A. H. Strong.

The theory of immediate imputation which offends against man's moral judgments, and contradicts Scripture, really furnishes no solution to the difficult problem which the theologians have set for themselves.

The idea that Adam entered into a bargain or agreement for the life or death of his descendants upon a trial of his own is incredible, because nowhere is such power of life and death given to man. Would it not have been murder in inconceivably great form, for Adam to have risked the lives of his descendants in this kind of a transaction? Did the God who teaches the sin of presumption in risking life put such a problem before Adam? Horrible the thought. If it was wrong for Cain to commit murder, it would have been unspeakably more horrible for Adam to have risked the murder of all his descendants, and the theory that he bargained to do it only adds to the cold bloodedness of the murder. The theory of the realist which makes the man himself responsible for his own death is infinitely preferable, despite the fact that it offends against common sense in thus asserting that men committed suicide thousands of years before they were born. But didn't Adam bring the death after all? Yes, but not by direct intention or bargain. He could not help being the race father, for he was the first man created. His fall was his weakness, but not the case of presumption which the immediate imputationist imagines.

Strong rejects the covenant of works decidedly. It would be interesting to hear him or Shedd explain why it is they hold on to the hypothesis of realism. Sweeping away the covenant of works does away with the problem which realism was intended to solve. It does away with the necessity for immediate imputation, and leaves us with only a natural problem, which can hardly be called a problem, since the working of the natural law is seen to be a fact of observation, however inscrutable it may be to us that the moral defect is transmitted as an invariable trait of corrupted human nature. It is better to leave this problem where the Bible leaves it rather than magnify the difficulties by unsupported philosophical theories.

BEARING OF ABRAHAMIC COVENANT AS IMPROPERLY INTERPRETED.

The foregoing discussion of the covenant of works was written without any direct connection of thought with the question of infant salvation. Belief in the possibility or probability of infant damnation is readily seen to be one of the corollaries of that doctrine. It is only that doctrine which makes possible that confusion of thought by which corruption of nature and liability to punishment are confounded with God's final judgments. This theory accustoms the mind to the idea of the natural damnability of infants and the absence of a remedy for this condition converts damnability into damnation. The second stage of the process is encouraged by an interpretation of God's covenant with Abraham which makes it a promise to the natural Israel, and exclusive in its nature, so that it becomes an easy inference to the exclusion of the heathen as such from salvation; and this general inference is broad enough to include even the infant children in the absence

of any clear provision by which they may be excepted. The process of thought by which they are excluded from salvation is not conjectural, but it comes to the front in the direct discussion of infant salvation, and especially of the "elect infant" clause of the Confession. It came out in the early discussion of this question, and the writer who had long before written upon the Abrahamic covenant was refused the privilege of answering the inconclusive arguments of those who contended that we have a promise of the salvation of the infant children of the church but not of the outside world of unbelievers.

The discussion of the meaning and scope of God's promise to Abraham, his great covenant of salvation with the world in general and the church in particular, was also written before the subjects of the elect infant clause and infant salvation were introduced to the church for general discussion and decision. It will not be the less valuable because it has been discussed purely upon its merits without primary reference to the mistaken inferences which have been drawn from its erroneous interpretation. It so happens that this and the former discussion are taken from extended manuscripts intended for publication. We trust that this preliminary airing will not detract from the value of these discussions in their more formal original connections, and that these more extended discussions may some day see the light.

It has been claimed for Calvinism that it is the only scheme which consistently provides for infant salvation because it seemingly provides for infant election. But this does not appear to be a just claim, as is seen in the fact that the church has been unwilling to assert that all dying infants are of the elect, and the idea that the dying infants of believers are elect and saved is connected with that false interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant which makes it teach that the church will be saved to the exclusion of the outside world. The dying infants of believers are considered to be saved because they are children of the covenant, which is understood to make them heirs of the promise of salvation, they being saved on their parent's account. This teaching is erroneous, for the teaching of Scripture concerning the meaning and scope of the Abrahamic covenant does not bear it out. It is a mistake to hold that all the natural children of Abraham are the true people of God, and so how upon this principle can it be made out that all the infants of believers even are of the number of the saved, and are of God's elect? And if the covenant does not furnish proper ground for the assertion that even the infants of believers are elect, what do we know of any limited class of such infants? In this case to talk of "elect infants" can mean no more than that if any such infants are elect they will be saved, which being interpreted means that whomsoever of dying infants God has determined to save he will save; but as to whether this includes the whole of the class of dying infants we are unable to say. To say that God will save whom he has elected to save is a worthless truism, which is deceptive in that it stands for some professed knowledge which we do not possess. It is merely a jugglery

with words. The boasted superiority of Calvinists on this subject is therefore without foundation.

Let us now take up the study of the covenant which constitutes God's covenant of life with the world.

THE COVENANT CHARTER.

The church of God on earth finds its true origin and its original constitution, in the covenant which God made with Abraham as the father of the faithful. Of course we find traces of the true religion running on back to the very beginning, but we do not find any organization of the righteous into an association of God's people, which perpetuated itself and carried out the purposes of a church. God called Abraham out of the world of heathenism and set him apart, together with his family unto the worship and service of the true God. He constituted him the father of the faithful for all time by an everlasting promise, sealed with a sign or token which was to be applied to all the male members of his race. This covenant is therefore properly considered the charter of the church's existence, a charter which has never been superseded and is never out of date. The church cannot properly be said to have sprung from Moses, and the giving of the law on mount Sinai; nor is it correct to date the church from the coming of Christ, or the day of Pentecost. A careful study of the Abrahamic covenant in the light of the New Testament Scriptures, goes to show that this is the only true starting point; nothing else can lay claim to the promise upon which the church rests.

If the Abrahamic covenant is really the charter of the church in all ages of its existence, it can readily be seen that a proper understanding of this promise, together with the significance of the seal which was first attached to it, must be of the highest importance in any inquiry into the nature of the Church and the Sacraments.

It can be readily understood that this investigation must have an important bearing upon all those ecclesiological questions which so divide the Christian Church of to-day. In view of this fact it is surprising that so little attention has been given to this promise by the great majority of ecclesiological writers, of whom only two or three have even attempted a historical and exegetical treatment of the church. Nearly all of the writers have pursued a defective, *a priori* method in dealing with the subject.

We shall not begin the discussion with a definition, for we wish to pursue the method of investigation throughout. A thing must be investigated before it can be understood, and it must be understood before it can be defined. A disregard of this plain common sense method which is the only method of scientific investigation, is the explanation of nearly all the differences of opinion on the subject of the Church, which characterizes the churches of to-day. The conceptions of various denominations result from prepossessions as to the importance of the essential

nature of certain matters of form or of organization. These give rise to various definitions of the church, which are of no higher authority than the mere opinions or preferences of men. The Scripture gives no formal definition of the church visible; and in the absence of a scriptural definition, we can make one for ourselves only by a comprehensive study of the church in its historical development. Of course we shall not have to proceed far before we are able to decide that a church is some kind of organization or body composed of God's people, or those who profess to be such; but the details of the definition can only come by a careful examination of the facts relative to the institution, and the constitution of such organization which God established in the earth for the furtherance of his own plans.

For the purposes of our discussion, we find it convenient to begin with an exegetical study of the Abrahamic covenant, but assume nothing by so doing, as will be observed in the development of the subject.

The Abrahamic covenant may be said to have had four principal stages of development. Promises were made to Abraham on four different occasions, exclusive of that form of the promise made in Gen. 22: 18. They are found in Gen. 12: 1-3, Ch. 13: 14-16, Ch. 15: Ch. 17. Besides this there is an explanatory statement by the Lord himself in Ch. 18: 18, 19. Their substantial unity is manifest in the fact that all alike have both the temporal and spiritual elements. The first promise of chapter 12 contains not merely a grant of material blessings, "I will make of thee a great nation," but also that which is admitted by all to be a promise of spiritual blessings; "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The same is contained in the phrase, "Be thou a blessing." After Abraham, in obedience to God's command, comes upon the land, he receives this promise: "All the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth then shall thy seed be numbered." (Gen. 13: 14-16.) The promise of a literally innumerable seed is perfectly explicit, and since it cannot find its fulfilment in a multiplication of the natural seed, it can only refer to Abraham's spiritual seed. The phrase "dust of the earth" might be understood to be an exaggerated expression for a great number, were it not for the following clause, but this clause shuts off a figurative interpretation, and it can mean nothing less than the countless number of Abraham's spiritual children, the "multitude which no man could number" pictured in revelation. The promise in chapter 15, "So shall thy seed be," comparing Abraham's seed to the stars for multitude, is simply an alternate form of the same promise; and it is certain that it is not a promise of simply a natural seed, for in Rom. 4: 18, the apostle quotes the very words of this promise, as the equivalent of the promise in chapter 17, that Abraham should be the father of many nations: "He in hope believed against hope to the end that he might become the father of many nations according to that which had been

spoken, So shall thy seed be." Again, Acts 3: 25, identifies the promise of chapter 17 with that of chapter 12, for it is a mixture of the two passages: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (cf. ch. 22: 18.) These Scriptures clearly exclude the interpretation which finds in these promises two covenants, separate and distinct in their character, the one confined to temporal blessings, and the other to spiritual. Besides this, the passage in Hebrews 11 represents even the ownership of the land as a part of the spiritual promise: "By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham's faith recognized in the promise of the ownership of the land the assurance of salvation itself. He must have understood that the possession of Canaan was typical of the possession of the heavenly rest.

There is no seal to the promise of the seed in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, except as this is involved in the promise of the land of Canaan. Of course the promise that Abraham should possess the land involved a seed numerous enough to take possession of it; but the seal had special reference to the possession. It was given in answer to Abraham's question, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The answer was the smoking furnace, and the torch passing between the parts of the sacrifices. God gives the meaning of the transaction: "Unto thy seed have I given this land." It was the ratifying seal to a deed of gift. This transaction secured to Abraham and his natural descendants temporal blessings; but it furnishes no ground for drawing a hard and fast line between this promise and that of chapter 17, calling one temporal and the other spiritual. This promise is on the other hand, repeated in chapter 17, as an integral part of the spiritual promise in its highest form of development. In fact, in chapter 17 there is a complete blending of the elements. First, the distinctively spiritual element is seen in the promise that Abraham was to be the father of a multitude of nations. This promise is made in the same absolute form as the last. God said, "As for me behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." If this is a promise of a spiritual seed, and it can be nothing else, it is easy to see that it could be definitely secured to Abraham in no other way than by an absolute promise. In token that it is absolute, and the blessing already secured to Abraham, he at this time receives the name which was to designate him as the possessor of the promised blessing. His fatherhood of an innumerable spiritual seed, is at once betokened by the change of name from Abram to Abraham, God himself giving the meaning of the change.

In the next clause there is no doubt a reference to temporal blessings for the nation of Israel: "I will make thee exceeding fruitful." The spiritual seed was at first at least to spring out of the natural seed; Abraham was to be a great nation. The clause "I will make nations of thee," etc. might be understood of the natural Israel if the plural

could apply to the division into two kingdoms. But if this be a reference to the nation of Israel, it must not be allowed to rob the next verse of its proper spiritual significance. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." This part of the promise is pointed out by ecclesiological writers as certainly showing that this is an ecclesiological covenant, establishing God's Church. While this is true, it should not be forgotten that the church here designated is the spiritual church rather than the natural Israel as such. The clause "throughout their generations" should not mislead, for this word is frequently used in Scripture in a moral, or spiritual sense. It cannot be maintained with any show of reason that the spiritual blessing of salvation was intended for all the natural Israel. God promised to be "a God" to Abraham and his seed. This included all that was contained in the relation designated by God's peculiar ecclesiological name, Jehovah, the God of their salvation. If he had been really the God of their salvation to all the nation, all would have been saved; but they were not. On the other hand, their history shows them to have been a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and they were finally as a nation rejected from being God's people. Paul tells us plainly that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children." It is not, therefore, "as though the word of God had come to nought" that the natural Israel failed to obtain the promise, for the children of the flesh were not the children of God. Rom. 9: 8. On the other hand, only "the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed." See also Gal. 3: 7-9. In the eleventh chapter of Romans, Paul teaches again that God's people to whom the promise was made were the elect. God did not cast off his people, he argues, because some were hardened and failed to receive the blessing, for the election obtained it. Then according to Paul's exposition the promise in Abraham was made only to the elect—in the highest sense. The external Israel was only the shell that contained the kernel, nothing more. In a sense Christ was the seed to whom the promise was made, but it embraces all who are in him by faith. It has been claimed that verse 7 must refer to temporal blessings, because God says, "I will establish my covenant," the word establish showing an allusion to a former transaction, rather than a new grant. But the Hebrew word for "establish" will not be found to bear out this contention, for the same word is used of the covenant with Noah, in Gen. 6: 18 and Gen. 9: 9, where only the original making of a covenant is referred to. This shows conclusively that nothing can be determined from the language used, as to the nature of the covenant, except as there is in the word a hint of the sovereign and gratuitous character of the promise.

Another reason for rejecting the interpretation which makes verse 7 refer to the covenant of chapter 15, is that this robs chapter 17 of its principal matter, and its most important differentiating feature. Examining the promises from the beginning, it appears that each new promise

contains something additional to that which preceded. In Gen. 12, there is no definite promise of the land, but the command, "Get thee out of thy country * * * unto the land that I will show thee" is accompanied by the promise that Abraham shall be a great nation. In Gen. 13, Abraham having come upon the land, receives the definite promise that the land which he sees shall be a gift to himself and his seed forever, while the promise of the seed itself is enlarged from a nation to an innumerable multitude. According to chapter 15, the promise of an innumerable spiritual seed is to find a partial fulfilment in the line of his real descendants, and God adds his pledge to the promise of the land. In chapter 17 the "multitude" of chapter 13 becomes a multitude of nations, and the promise is not only with Abraham himself, but with his seed, which it is pointed out makes this a promise to the church. The sign of circumcision becomes a constant reminder of the promise in this enlarged form. The promise of the land, though included in the spiritual promise, is not directly sealed by circumcision, for it had its seal in chapter 15. It is inserted in chapter 17 in order to give completeness to the covenant which establishes the church. The church visible must have a home, and the temporal home secured by the promise typified the eternal home in heaven.

THE PROMISE ABSOLUTE.

In accordance with its nature as a promise of salvation to the elect people of God, the righteous, it is absolutely sure, as a gift of sovereign grace. It is not at all conditional in the sense of being a bargain or contract between two parties, in which the result is made to depend upon a condition or stipulation. The clause "walk before me and be thou perfect" is not rightly so regarded. This is God's command, and the promise assures the existence of a people of the character thus indicated. God speaks in his majesty and sovereignty saying: "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." There is no tarrying for the fulfilment of a condition, but God immediately changes the name Abram to Abraham in token that he already possessed the blessing, in that it was made sure by God's word. The fulfilment of the promise being in God's view involved in no uncertainty, God's making his covenant is simply giving his promise, which promise was from the first absolutely certain of fulfilment. The promise is reference to the land of Canaan is itself absolute in form: "In that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land." The same unconditional form of covenant is found in the promise to Noah. Gen. 6: 18. The unconditional feature appears in the first promise made to Abraham in chapter 12. When God first appeared to Abraham, he did not ask him whether he desired a blessing, or whether he was willing to do anything to obtain it, he came with a command, "Get thee out thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto the land that I will show thee." Of course

there was a sense in which the blessing was consequent upon obedience. If Abraham had refused obedience, it cannot be supposed that he would have received any blessing, but God knew what Abraham by his grace would do. He saw the end from the beginning, hence the blessing was as absolute in form as the command: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great: and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This was spoken to Abraham as the divinely appointed head of the church as appears from Paul's exposition of the promise in the fourth chapter of Romans. Since it was according to grace it was sure to all the (spiritual) seed. Rom. 4: 16.

In chapter 15 appears the first intimation of any connection between Abraham's state of mind and the promise: "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for (unto) righteousness." This does not say that his faith was the instrumental cause of his salvation, but it indicates the occasion of the promise to Abraham and his seed, and anticipates that faith would become the channel through which the blessing of salvation would be conveyed to the true people of God in all ages. Abraham's faith was not the antecedent but the consequent of the promise, therefore it did not condition the promise. (cf. Rom. 4: 20, 21.) It now seems clear that the words "walk before me and be thou perfect" are not to be understood as a stipulation of the promise. It is in fact a part of that salvation which the promise secures. Holiness is not the procuring cause of salvation, but it is salvation itself.

The absolute character of the promise and its spiritual nature go together. If it is a promise of spiritual good, that is, salvation, it is plain that it can only include those who are the spiritual children of Abraham, the righteous. Only God could know the individuals who were really embraced within its scope; but it is evident that it included all who would be saved—all the elect people of God who should at last stand before the great white throne, as members of the complete church of the redeemed in glory. But although really made to embrace the church invisible rather than the visible church it constitutes *the great promise of salvation to man*. As such it was committed to Abraham as the head of the visible church, and by the accompanying sign of circumcision his family and race were constituted the Church of God on Earth. A different view of the covenant has been held by some eminent theologians and interpreters, and it is therefore necessary to establish this exposition by a more extended discussion and examination of other views.

Dr. John M. Mason, whose valuable discussion of the church points out the ecclesiological character of the covenant, understands it to promise certain spiritual blessings to the external church, thus making it apply to all Abraham's natural seed, with certain specially named exceptions. He makes a broad distinction between the promise of chapter 15 and that of chapter 17, making the one a promise of temporal good,

and the other of spiritual blessings. The promise of chapter 17, "I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee," establishes a new relation to God, which, however, is not "Abraham's relation to God as the God of his salvation, because in that sense God was his God long before." Besides, it embraced his seed as well as himself, and "God did not now engage to be their God with respect to eternal life, for all that was settled in the covenant of grace, and the privilege could not reach beyond those who were partakers of the same precious faith with Abraham, whereas in the sense of this covenant God was the God of all Abraham's seed without exception, under the limitations which restricted the covenant operation first to Isaac and afterwards to Jacob, including such as should choose their God, their faith and their society." (Peck.) The clause, "throughout their generations" is understood to teach that "as soon as a new individual of his seed was generated, he was within the covenant, and so God was his God." Hence it is argued that the covenant with Abraham and his seed contemplated them not primarily or immediately as the election of grace, but as an aggregate which is severed from the bulk of mankind, and placed in a social character under peculiar relations to the most high God."

Now it will be observed that this view of the meaning and scope of the covenant finds its only support in that interpretation which makes a wide difference between the several forms of the promise, and confines the spiritual element to chapter 17. The mistake probably arises from an effort to interpret the promises as they stand, without bringing to bear the full light of the New Testament Scriptures, for surely Paul's exposition in Romans (Ch. 9: 11), and Galatians (Ch. 3), and others already quoted, place the true meaning of the covenant beyond question.

It is very true that there is involved a promise of ecclesiastical privileges, and of material blessings; these, however, in all forms of the promise are subservient, while the spiritual element is the all important one. It is an eternal promise, certified by God's seal, and secures salvation to all the people of God, and covers the whole sweep of the church's existence. It must always hold its true place of importance as God's Covenant of Salvation with Man. It may be regarded as God's formal announcement of his eternal purpose of salvation, and it furnishes a basis for all other gospel promises. One reason why this has not been clearly apprehended is, that the word "covenant" has been misunderstood.

MEANING OF THE WORD COVENANT.

In order to show that the word "covenant" offers no bar to the above interpretation, let us carefully search for the scriptural meaning of the word in the Old Testament. The word does not always imply a reciprocal promise or a conditional promise, but it ordinarily contains a very different idea when God's covenant's with man are spoken of. If this is true, the ordinary definitions of the word given by the books will have to be modified. Dr. Hodge, for instance, defines a covenant as a conditional

promise, and says the analysis of a covenant always gives the following elements: (a) Its parties. (b) Its promise. (c) Its conditions. (d) Its penalty. *See Hodge on the Confession*, p. 169. Dabney in his *Theology* says, It means covenant or agreement, being often used to express theologically God's covenants with man, and naturally compacts between individuals. There are also (he says) cases in which it means an arrangement or dispensation of matters determined on. Ex. 34: 28; Jer. 33: 20." The last statement properly applied gives us pretty nearly what we need. A careful examination of all the passages, both in the Old Testament and the New, where the word occurs—eliminating such phrases as "blood of the covenant" and "ark of the covenant," which contain no variant usage of the word, but only indicate that these things are connected with the Sinai covenant—will show that all the instances of the usage where a covenant of God with men is indicated are referable to three distinct transactions, the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Abraham, and the covenant with Israel on Sinai. The covenant with David, and the "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31 are not original covenants but only reiterations of the Abrahamic covenant. There appears to be not a single exception to this statement. The cases cited by Dabney are only apparent not real exceptions. When in Ex. 24:8 the ten commandments are called the "words of the covenant," this conforms to the usage. They are words of the covenant in that they specify particularly the obedience which the covenant required. God's requirement "if ye will obey my voice" really covers the whole of the Mosaic legislation.

Jeremiah 33: 20 is no doubt an allusion to the covenant with Noah: "If you can break my covenant with the day, and my covenant with the night, so that there shall not be day and night in their season: then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant." We find in Gen. 8: 22, the very promise here referred to. It is God's resolution in reference to the establishment of the covenant with Noah, showing that in it he pledged the perpetuity of the seasons and the orderly working of the laws of nature.

There is one other passage which would be regarded by some as exceptional, Hosea 6: 7, which has been understood as a possible reference to a covenant with Adam. This impression arises from the indefiniteness of the Hebrew word for "man" (*adam*). It is indeclinable, and singular or plural or proper name according to the context. The Revision translates it "Adam," but in this case the old version is to be preferred. It is little in favor of the proper name that it makes a reference to a supposed covenant with Adam which is nowhere else referred to in the Scripture. Gesenius gives the translation "like men," and says it means "common men," or as we should say men of the world, see Ps. 17: 14.*

*He mentions three places where the expression is used: in two of these the Revision has adopted the translation "like Adam." In Job 31: 33, following the A. V., it places "Adam" in the text and "after the manner

Let us now examine the several covenants, in order to ascertain the meaning of the word, for this is the only correct method of ascertaining the Biblical meaning. It is one of the best established canons of philology, that the ultimate decision as to the meaning of any word in any language is to be determined by a careful inspection of all the cases of its usage. It is not right to judge of God's covenants with men by the meaning of the word as it is used of compacts between man and man, but by inspecting the covenants themselves. Our idea of the word should be derived from the ascertained knowledge of the thing, not the thing judged by a preconceived use of the word.

The first transaction to which in Scripture the word "covenant" is applied is the covenant with Noah. It stands as an unconditional promise, to which an attesting sign is attached. (Gen. 9: 11). "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth." The expression "between me and the earth" includes not only man but "every living creature," and so it secures the stability of Nature. God says: "While the earth remaineth seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Here then is a covenant which is neither an agreement, nor a "conditional promise."

The next covenant is with Abraham. As already seen the promises to Abraham are really one, whether viewed as one covenant or two. The New Testament writers seem to use both methods of expression indiscriminately. Stephen in his speech in the Acts deals with all these promises as one. After reciting God's dealings with Abraham in chapter 7: 2-8, he embraces the whole under the expression, "the promise": "But as the time of the promise drew nigh." (v. 17.) In Eph. 2: 12 Paul speaks of them as "the covenants of the promise." This expresses just what has been above asserted concerning the promises. In one sense there are two covenants, but they are inseparable and practically one. See this conception also in Eph. 3: 6. "The Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, fellow partakers of the promise in (or

of men" in the margin; but in Ps. 82: 7, the translation "like Adam" is so clearly out of place that "like men" is retained. We think that "like men" is preferable on grounds of interpretation in all these passages. In Hosea the rendering "like Adam" is rejected by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown on the ground that "the expression covenant is not found elsewhere applied to Adam's relations to God," though he says the things seems implied. An additional argument for its rejection is, that it makes an unnatural and forced connection with the preceding verse, which speaks of the emptiness of Israel's obedience to the Mosaic law. They broke that covenant in reality while professing to carry out its provisions in ritual observances, thus acting like common men, that is, men of the world.

by) Christ Jesus through the gospel." Gentiles were fellow partakers with the Jews in the original promise, of which Christ was the surety. It has already been seen that the promise of chapter 12 is without condition, and this original declaration really covers the whole ground. If now the promise of chapter 13 be examined, it is equally as absolute: "For all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." The two specifications of this promise are sealed in chapters 15 and 17 respectively. In chapter 15 there is no condition, there is a simple declaration: "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." In harmony with this introduction the promise itself is direct and without stipulation: "Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to tell them, and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord: and he counted it to him for righteousness. And God said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it." The gift of the land is afterwards spoken of as a thing already accomplished: "Unto thy seed have I given this land," and this is the meaning of the seal applied to the gift. The remark immediately following this: "In that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram," seems to be closely connected in thought with the sealing transaction, and suggests that God means by his covenant his promise with his seal attached.

Coming to chapter 17, we still find no condition. It is too late to introduce a stipulation here, for the promise has been already three times made to Abraham without stipulation. The command, "Walk before me and be thou perfect," can only be a requirement which indicates alike the natural obligation to be faithful to God as the God of his salvation, and as indicating the general character of God's true people. The spiritual element of the promise becomes more distinct in this chapter, and its form is equally absolute with those which preceded: "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." It seems fitting that the promise which established a visible church should also give assurance of a local habitation to that church. The idea of eternity connected with this part of the promise can only refer to its typical meaning. God promised to give the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and to be their God. The close connection of the last clause shows the promise of the land to be a part of the covenant with the church, and there must be a spiritual meaning. It secured the possession of Canaan to the nation of Israel, but since the promise to be their God applied to the spiritual Israel the "everlasting" promise to the same parties can mean nothing less than a home for the redeemed, that is, heaven itself. It is equivalent to saying, "I will give them an everlasting home, and will be their God." That the promise of the land was mainly intended as a blessing for the true Israel may be inferred from the fact that so large a number of those who went out of Egypt were slain in the wilderness, being unworthy to inherit even the natural

blessing. It seems clear that the sign of circumcision must indirectly have sealed the possession of the land, but without having any special reference to natural blessings, for it was the special seal of the spiritual promise. But the external church was to contain the spiritual, and it must have a sign or "token of the covenant," which must be carefully kept. "This is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee, every male of you shall be circumcised . . . and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Circumcision stood as the reminder and pledge of God's absolute spiritual promise, and since the promise was absolute this seal gave assurance to Abraham that he should have a spiritual following of his own real descendants, and it secured the perpetuity of the true church down to the end of time.

The next covenant to be considered is that which God made with Israel at Sinai. This is conditional in form; it contains a stipulation; and in this respect it stands out in striking contrast with the covenants which have been already examined. "Now, therefore," saith Jehovah, "if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples." The condition was explicitly accepted. The people responded, "All the words that the Lord hath commanded will we do." (Ex. 9: 8.) This first message was preliminary to the meeting called at Sinai for the third day. At that time, after all the commandments and judgments had been delivered, the people responded, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and be obedient. "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Ex. 24: 7.) The sprinkled blood was a seal of the promise, and as such it was denominated "the blood of the covenant." It stood for a pledge on the part of the people as well as of God.

Let us now examine 2 Sam. 7: 12-16, where the first mention of the covenant with David occurs. There seems to be a parallel to the covenant with Abraham in the promise, "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom forever." There is no conditional promise here. God says expressly of this seed, "If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men . . . but my mercy shall not depart from him." The promise of the stability of his kingdom is solemnly repeated: "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." (cf. 1 Sam. 23: 5.) Turning to Isaiah 9: 27, we find that this promise to David refers to Christ. "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth and forever." There is no element of doubt or contingency in such a promise from God's point of view.

In Jer. 31: 31 a new covenant with Israel is prophesied. This was a promise of spiritual blessing, specially contrasted with the covenant of

Sinai in regard to its absolute nature. (See v. 32: 33.) "Thus saith the Lord which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinance of the moon and the stars for a light by night . . . the Lord (Jehovah) of the hosts is his name: if these ordinances depart from before me saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever." Thus it is made parallel with the covenant of Noah in its absolute certainty. The last two covenants have no seal because they are not original covenants, but only reiterations of the Abrahamic covenant, and as such already sealed.

This completes the list, and it is now possible to construct a definition of the word covenant. We find that out of five cases examined only one contains a stipulation or condition. The others are all absolute promises, not "agreements" in the ordinary sense of that word, and have nothing to do with "conditions" or "penalties." All the original covenants, however, do have a sign or seal attached, and this should, no doubt, be regarded as an essential feature of a covenant. It is God's oath added to the promise, and they together constitute the covenant. The latter feature is expressed in the words, "I swear to give" literally, "I lifted up my hand." (Ex. 6: 8.) The passage from which this quotation is taken is an extended and formal renewal of the Abrahamic covenant as a covenant with Israel as God's people, and it prepares the way for the Sinai covenant which follows. The covenant with the national church on mount Sinai, while a conditional promise in form, is so connected with the old covenant as to show that it was intended to carry out the provisions of that covenant. And this is what Paul teaches in Galatians. The law which came 430 years afterwards could not disannul the promise. On the other hand, the promise is renewed in solemn form in Exodus 6: 2-8. "I am Jehovah" occurs four times in the brief recital of that covenant. He says, I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God who bringeth you out from the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swear to give to Abraham." Here is the promise complete, and mentioned as having been attested by an oath. We find the same settled purpose indicated in the covenant itself. The preface reads: Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now therefore if ye will obey my voice," etc. From this it appears that from the first, keeping the covenant is presented as an obligation to God, made specially binding by the fact that they were his own people whom he redeemed from Egyptian bondage. There is no voluntary element in the sense that an acceptance of the covenant was purely optional on the part of Israel. The obligation existed anyhow; the voluntary element consisted in their willing acceptance or acknowledgment of the obligation.

The same ground of obedience is presented in the preface to the decalogue itself: "I am Jehovah thy God which brought thee out of

the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Jeremiah puts the matter in the same light, in chapter 7: 22, 23, God says: "For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I command them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God and ye shall be my people." These passages give us God's own interpretation of his covenant, and leave nothing to be desired.

If the Sinai covenant imposed an obligation which did not depend upon Israel's will or even await their consent, it is plain that the same covenant with the same condition might have been made without their consent. This, however, was not God's plan: it would not have been in accordance with God's main purpose in giving the law. The law was intended to be a discipline and an education to Israel, and it was aimed at securing a willing obedience: hence God purposely made their consent to the transaction a prominent feature of this covenant, and it became a reciprocal promise in form. In this respect it is a unique transaction; but it comes under the definition, being a promise of God accompanied by his attesting seal. Compare this with Heb. 6: 13-18. The attesting seal was equivalent to God's oath given in connection with the promise, and such attestation naturally becomes an important part of the covenant. A covenant of God with men may therefore be defined as, A solemn promise on God's part, conditional or unconditional, which is sealed by a visible sign. The sign or token of a covenant is necessarily its seal, and the words are used interchangeably in Scripture.

It will be observed that the voluntary element, which is so important a feature of a covenant as commonly defined, has no place in this definition. It is, of course, an important feature in covenants between man and man, but plays no important part in God's covenants with men. Only one of the covenants, that of Sinai has this feature at all; but the voluntary element in that is not an essential feature as is seen in such passages as Josh. 7: 11; 23: 16, where God speaks of his covenant as commanded. Josh. 23: 16 also threatens the anger of the Lord and death for disobedience. Consult Judges 2: 20; I Kings 11: 11, where the same significant expressions occur.

ADDITIONAL NEW TESTAMENT PROOFS.

Having once established the fact that the covenant with Abraham is an absolute or unconditional spiritual promise, its true significance as a promise of salvation to the elect is readily accepted. The fact that that covenant was in some sense a promise of spiritual blessings has been pretty generally recognized, but the failure to apprehend its absolute character has no doubt caused ecclesiological writers to overlook the fact that it is a promise of salvation to the true children of Abraham, the spiritual Israel. Some writers understand it as simply marking one of several stages of the covenant of grace. Some regard it as spoken to the visible church, and, therefore, as embracing nominal

professors, in a promise of certain natural advantages, which should have a tendency to lead to salvation. In order, therefore, to establish more fully the true scope of this covenant, let us bring to bear additional New Testament light.

It was made with Abraham and his seed. What seed? Paul says (Rom. 4: 11) that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." This teaches as plain as language can do that the seed of Abraham referred to in the promise are his spiritual seed. It matters not whether they be Jews or Gentiles (if responsible persons), they are such as are of the faith. He was to be the heir of the world through the righteousness of faith, and as such he is the father of us all—"not of those who are of the law, but of those who are of the faith of Abraham." (v. 16.)

Turning to Galatians the same result is obtained in a different way. "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not And to seeds, as of many, but of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3: 16.) It is evident that Paul means to quote the exact language, and the last clause of Gen. 17: 7 corresponds to the question. To hold that Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit presses the singular here with reference to Christ, when the word as it stood in the original form was intended to designate the natural children, is not allowable; it would seem clear, therefore, that the word must have a double reference, embracing Christ and all the people of God, whether the reference be to Christ considered as one in the line of the spiritual children, or whether "thy seed" designate the elect as one body in Christ. This reconciles Paul in Galatians with Paul in Romans, without the necessity of holding with Meyer that "Paul adopts an interpretation which is a feat of rabbinical subtlety." The interpretive clause, "which is Christ," may be understood to mean, "which in the highest sense refers to Christ." Thus the covenant embraces all the elect and no others. As a promise of salvation it embraces all the saved, it could hardly be otherwise. It named no individuals, but God of course knew what individuals were embraced within its scope. Such a promise which was "made sure to all the seed is necessarily a counterpart of the eternal decree of salvation which embraced all the saved. With the exception of the first promise of Eden, it was the first expression of the "eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus." It embraced the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, although this was not at first so clearly manifest as afterwards.

Although a promise of salvation it did not at first appear so clearly that it was a promise to or through a personal Savior. There is no reason to believe that Abraham was able to grasp in its fullness this hidden mean-

ing of the promise, it was enough for him that he could see in it the comprehensive blessing of God's reconciled countenance and favorable consideration. It is not likely that he understood the full extent of the blessing which was promised to him, or the full significance of the promise in reference to the church. To affirm this would be to hold that the dawn of salvation in the protevangelium was speedily followed by a noonday splendor. But as our first parents must have understood that the victory over the tempter which was promised to the seed of the woman was a victory over sin, and a remedy of their fallen condition, so Abraham must have understood that the promise of God to be his God, and the assurance given in the words "Fear not" meant his salvation. This is plainly asserted in Hebrews 11: 9. Whether he understood just what the promise to his seed meant, may well be doubted. He must have known that the promised blessing necessarily involved an upright walk, for God had prefaced the promise with the command, "Walk before me and be thou perfect," but whether he understood that the promise was in the most important sense to his spiritual children only, we have no means of knowing. But after all it matters not how much of the truth Abraham understood, the question for us is not what was Abraham's conception of the blessing, but what was God's conception of his own promise, and the only way to get this is to bring to bear the light of the New Testament Scriptures, which must be allowed to settle this question.

Paul in the third and fourth chapters of Galatians draws such a broad contrast between the covenant of the law and the covenant of promise as should place the significance and scope of the latter beyond dispute. He asserts the perpetual binding force of the promise which had been "confirmed by God" as contrasted with the temporary and evanescent character of the law covenant; and afterwards under the figure of the bond woman and the free contrasts the temporal with the spiritual character of the same covenants. He argues the perpetuity of the promise from its very nature as a simple promise, as contrasted with the reciprocal character of the law-covenant on Sinai. "The covenant (of promise) confirmed beforehand by God, the law which came 430 years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise (to Abraham) of none effect." (Gal. 3: 17.) He then insists upon the essential difference between the two transactions, the giving of the law and the promise, the difference being just that which has been noted in the study of the covenants themselves, that the one is an absolute promise of spiritual good, while the other is a reciprocal promise hinging upon the stipulation of obedience. The latter was a covenant in the ordinary sense of an agreement between two parties brought about by the employment of a mediator, but in the other case there was no mediator, indeed he could have no place, since there was only one party to be considered; that is to say, the Abrahamic covenant was a free and sovereign grant, which had no conditions attached. This is expressed in such succinct language that it has greatly mystified interpreters and led to a great number of attempted solutions of the elliptical passage. Instead of the

ordinary rendering, "A mediator is not a mediator of one." (v. 20.) Let us read more literally, "Now there is no mediator of one"; that is to say, there can be no mediator where there is only one party. In the nature of the case no mediator could be employed in a transaction such as that with Abraham, in which God gave a simple promise, absolute and final in its nature, a sovereign grant of spiritual good.

In the fourth chapter the apostle goes on to speak of the natural transition which took place between the law and the gospel. The law was intended to lead to Christ. Its office as a covenant, or as a means of salvation, was necessarily temporary. The law as a moral code, could only serve to show the impossibility of being saved by law; "it was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Christ was the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believed; all the types pointed to him and in him had their fulfilment. While thus the covenant or dispensation of the law expired by limitation, the coming of Christ was only the most important stage in the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise. He was the "seed to whom the promise was made" (v. 19), and he was "made a curse for us" that even "upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus." (Ch. 3: 14.) Paul thus tells in so many words that Christ died in order to carry out the provisions of the covenant with Abraham.

Again, he teaches the spirituality and perpetuity of the Abrahamic promise by the contrast between the two covenants as represented by Sarah and Hagar, or by their sons, Isaac and Ishmael. One represents the Jerusalem that now is, while the other stands for the Jerusalem that is above. One beareth children unto bondage, while the children of the other are children of the promise. The one is a worldly church which by a spurious legalism seeks salvation; the other is the true spiritual church, which by accepting Christ as Saviour, and giving up the beggarly elements that served once to dimly foreshadow him, has attained the true freedom, and the inheritance of the promise. Says Paul, "the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." He thus teaches that the church of Christ, which proclaims salvation by faith, is the only true representative of Abraham. Those who depended upon a natural connection merely, and expected to be saved by an adherence to the Mosaic law would fail. The Mosaic law could not give salvation on the principle of "Do and live" (Ch. 3: 12) for the simple reason that it had never been kept and never could be. (Ch. 5: 3.) It could only lead to bondage. Paul teaches then in the whole discussion that the promise to Abraham is perpetual, and applies in its highest sense to the true people of God only. Nor can it be justly claimed that this exposition of the apostle is forced or unnatural, for it agrees perfectly with what God stated in the very beginning to be his purpose in his dispensation to Abraham. That purpose was ethical and spiritual, having for its object the training of a godly seed. (Gen. 18: 19).

In view of this exposition, the true meaning of the additional clause

of the promise in Gen. 22: 17 appears, in which God says: "And thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies." Placed as it is between two clauses which import spiritual blessing, it can mean nothing less than a pledge of the final triumph of the spiritual kingdom. A parallel is seen in Moses' last prophecy (Deut. 33), in which he says to Joseph: "His horns are the horns of the wild ox: with them he shall push the peoples all of them, even the ends of the earth." (cf. Isa. 26: 5-9.

So also the promise of the land which was given to Abraham and his seed for an "everlasting possession" must have had a higher meaning than the possession of Canaan.

VIEWS OF THE WRITERS.

Before dismissing the covenant, it may be well to note the views of several standard writers on this subject.

Kurtz considered it an indefinite promise of salvation covering the Old Testament period which culminated in the incarnation. It was a conditional promise in which Abraham must fulfill his part of the bargain.

Oehler says the expression, "They shall bless themselves in Abraham's seed" can only mean, They shall wish for themselves the blessing of revelation which Abraham has, and reach it through the medium of Abraham's race." Not all the natural descendants are true sons of Abraham and heirs of the promise.

Mason and Calvin both held that the promise applied to the natural seed. Calvin says that in one sense the covenant includes the elect. In his commentary he explains "father of many nations" as referring to a spiritual progeny; but under verse 7, discussing the phrase "and thy seed after thee," he says, They are deceived who think that his elect alone are here pointed out; and that all the faithful are indiscriminately comprehended, from whatever people according to the flesh they are descended." Since this is at variance with the conclusions above reached, let us follow Calvin in his reasoning. He goes on to say, "For on the contrary, the Scripture declares that the race of Abraham by lineal descent had been peculiarly accepted by God. And it is the evident doctrine of Paul concerning the natural descendants of Abraham that they are holy branches which have proceeded from a holy root." (Rom. 11: 16.) And lest any one should restrict this assertion to the shadows of the law, or should evade it by allegory he elsewhere expressly declares that Christ came to be a minister of the circumcision. (Rom. 15: 8.) Wherefore nothing is more certain (he says) than that God made his covenant with those sons of Abraham who were naturally to be born of him." Calvin realizes the apparent inconsistency of the two statements, so he tries to find a way out of the difficulty. He says, "If any one object that this opinion by no means agrees with the former, in which we said that they are reckoned the children of Abraham who being by faith ingrafted into his body form one family; the difference is easily reconciled by laying down certain distinct degrees of adoption, which may be col-

lected from various passages of Scripture. In the beginning, antecedently to this covenant, the whole world was one and the same. But as soon as it was said, "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee," the church was separated from the other nations; just as in the creation of the world the light emerged out of the darkness. Then the people of Israel was received as the flock of God into their own fold; the other nations wandered like wild beasts through mountains, woods and deserts. Since this dignity in which the sons of Abraham excelled other nations, depended on the word of God alone, the gratuitous adoption of God belongs to them all in common. For if Paul deprives the Gentiles of God and eternal life, on the ground of their being aliens from the covenant (Eph. 2: 12), it follows that all Israelites were of the household of the church, and sons of God and heirs of eternal life."

There are a number of points in this extract which call for particular attention. Let us first note that Calvin takes the promise as if made with individuals. He tells us that nothing is more certain than that God made his covenant with those sons of Abraham who were naturally to be born of him," so that "the gratuitous adoption of God belongs to them all in common." If it refers to the natural seed as such it is a promise to them all individually; therefore, one of two things must be true; either it is a promise of salvation to them all, or it is a promise simply of the external privileges of the church with its conditional offer of salvation. If the latter, it is deprived of its definite character, as a promise of salvation; how then can it be said by its terms to embrace the elect? If this is a promise to Christ of a seed, it must be sure. The difficulty appears to arise from giving a perfectly general promise a particular application which is not warranted. God does not pledge himself that the promised seed shall include all the individuals of the Jewish nation. But does not Calvin mean to say that all the Jews would be saved? Otherwise what can he mean by saying that as members of the church they are all "sons of God and heirs of eternal life"? They could hardly be said to be heirs of something they were never to receive; besides, this meaning is forced upon us by the antithesis, according to which exclusion from the church means exclusion from salvation. "If Paul (he says) deprives the Gentiles of God and eternal life on the ground of their being aliens from the covenant, it follows that all Israelites were of the household of the church, and sons of God and heirs of eternal life." It seems strange that so remarkable a conclusion did not serve to betray the faultiness of the logic. If we should grant that membership in the the visible church were essential to salvation, it still would not follow that all members of the church would be saved, unless church membership be a sure title to salvation, in some such way as Rome contends for, which certainly is not Paul's teaching. According to Paul we become "sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ," and they only are sons of God who are led by the Spirit of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Again, what right have we to conclude from Eph. 2: 12 that lack of external connection with

the covenant deprives one of salvation? The very first specification of the condition of the Ephesians is sufficient to bear out Paul's conclusion, namely, "Ye were at that time separate from Christ." This fully accounts for their "having no hope," and their "being without God." Does any one suppose that Paul intends to say that they were without Christ because they did not belong to the nation of Israel? or to imply that they would have to pass through Judaism in order to reach Christ? This is contrary to Paul's most positive teaching. "In Christ Jesus he says neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love." He contends most earnestly against the Judaizers. We must conclude that Paul never intended to deprive the Gentiles of God and eternal life because they had no connection with the Jewish church; on the other hand, he teaches distinctly: "If ye are Christs, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise."

The next text upon which Calvin bases his idea that the promise to Abraham applies to Israel as such is Romans 11: 16. From this he thinks that "it is the evident doctrine of Paul concerning the natural descendants of Abraham that they are holy branches which have proceeded from a holy root." This is certainly an unfortunate citation from which to argue a reference of the covenant to the natural Israel as such. It is true that Paul says, "If the first fruit is holy so is the lump; and if the root is holy so are the branches," but he immediately goes on to say that some of the branches were broken off. They were broken off by their unbelief, that is to say, they broke themselves off by their own refusal to believe, by which they put themselves out of harmony with the root. On the other hand, the branches that were grafted in stood by faith; it is therefore certain that the word holy is not used in a ceremonial sense, and does not apply to all Israel as a race. The natural branches were not all holy, therefore the "lump" which like the first fruits is holy does not represent Israel as such; but an aggregate of God's true people. Paul goes on to teach that it was possible for the natural branches to be grafted in again, if they continued not in their unbelief; for God is able to graft them in again. Nay more, this will actually take place—they shall be grafted into their own olive tree (Rom. 11: 24), the result being that finally all Israel shall be saved. This result is pledged in the covenant itself, for the apostle goes on to say, "Even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them. When I shall take away their sins." In regard to this event the apostle adds, "As touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake." What fathers? Why those to whom the promise was made; and the unavoidable inference from this is, that the covenant was intended for the elect. Does he not say that the election obtain the blessing of salvation by reason of this covenant with the fathers? The passage then tells strongly against those interpreters who taking the holy root to be the patriarchs, make the holy branches (in the language

of Meyer) to be "the whole body of the people, to whom the character of holiness—consecration in property to God—passed over."

The citation of Rom. 15: 8 to sustain the position that the covenant embraces the natural Israel, is scarcely more fortunate. Christ was made a minister of the circumcision," but for what purpose? "That he might confirm the promises unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." Perhaps the most natural interpretation of these words is to take the latter clause as a specially mentioned result of the confirmation of the promises. All the succeeding quotations refer to the salvation of the Gentiles, and the glory of God in the salvation of the Gentiles is certainly one of the purposes for which Christ came. But his mission was first of all to the Jews, as he himself explains, and for the carrying out of the provisions of the covenant to them. It was "for the truth of God" in the sense of demonstrating the truth of the covenant promise to both Jews and Gentiles; and since the result of this "confirming of the promises" was salvation to the Gentiles, the result as regards the Jews must have been the same, rather than the carrying out of any lower and merely subordinate purpose. But we could no more conclude from this that all the "circumcision" would be saved than that all the Gentiles should be saved. He is not speaking of individuals but of classes. The passage goes to show clearly that the Gentiles were included in the true purport of the covenant.

Again, Matt. 8: 12 is cited as showing that "they who were unbelievers among the Jews are yet called the children of the celestial kingdom." Nay, not the children of the celestial kingdom, but of the earthly kingdom, the church. How could they be of the celestial kingdom, and at the same time "cast out?" "He came unto his own (says John) and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." According to John therefore only those who believe have a right to claim a heritage in the celestial kingdom. There can be no degrees of adoption or sonship, nor of any reconciliation on such a theory of the two entirely distinct and irreconcilable views of the covenant. It is true that God does in Ex. 4: 22 speak of Israel as "my son my first born;" but this is applicable only to the people as a whole, and because Israel at that time represented the true church; it gives no warrant for the indiscriminate application of the term to Jews. David seems to have understood this. His last words contain a prophecy of the Righteous One, together with what is no doubt a description of his kingdom, "which he ruleth in righteousness." The description applies only to the righteous. It is "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds." As "the tender grass springing out of the earth.* Just after this description he says, "Verily my house is not so with God." Nevertheless the covenant itself is "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." It is a

*See the first figure in Prov. 4: 18; on the second, consult; Ps. 37: 2, Ps. 102: 4; Isa. 40: 24; Jer. 12: 4.

covenant of salvation, for he says, "It is all my salvation and all my desire." It is easy to see then how David himself understood that it did not apply to his house in the natural sense. It referred to a kingdom from which the ungodly are necessarily excluded. (2 Sam., Ch. 7.) The covenant with David was only a renewal of the Abrahamic covenant, just as the covenant was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. The covenant with David therefore required no seal because of this identity. The identity becomes apparent when we see that they were both spiritual, eternal, and having reference alike to the great plan of salvation. The covenant with David regards the matter from the standpoint of the kingdom, which should be a final, glorious, eternal success. That spiritual kingdom is the church, which must therefore be traced back to Abraham—to the original spiritual, eternal covenant.

The patriarchal age should receive a better recognition by ecclesiologists than it has at the hands of those who place the origin of the church in the Mosaic economy, as is done by such eminent writers as Kurtz and Oehler, who recognize in the patriarchal age a sort of indefinable germ of the church; and by S. J. Baird, who poetically refers to the patriarchal age as a "betrothal," while the marriage, the constitution of the church, took place at the giving of the Sinai covenant. The generally accepted view in our church is that of Dr. J. M. Mason, and Dr. Stuart Robinson which gives the church its true starting point in the covenant with Abraham, but interprets that covenant as having reference to Israel as a people. This view appears to be an acceptance of the second of Calvin's inconsistent interpretations, while eliminating the first. The foregoing discussion, which grows out of an interpretation original with the author, and entirely independent of Calvin, goes to show that Calvin was correct in his first statement of the covenants scope; and we must eliminate the second of the inconsistent views, and seek a different answer to the question, How did God's covenant with Abraham constitute the church? How is it that the great promise of salvation which embraces the invisible church comes to be the charter of the church visible?

FALSE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT REASONING.

The reason why so little progress has been made in the discussion of infant salvation seems to be on account of the false issues raised and the inconsistent reasoning put forth. The attempt has been made to discuss infant election as if this were an identical question with that of infant salvation instead of a mere inference from the established fact of infant salvation. Of course there is no light to be shed directly upon infant election. The most pretentious work which has appeared in our church on this subject, entitled the *Theology of Infant Salvation* (R. A. Webb, D.D.) begins the discussion with a definition of infants which is inconsistent with his statement and discussion of the Calvinistic position. The author quotes with approval a definition of Dr. S. S.

Laws which defines infants as irresponsible persons. "Who are infants? (he asks.) Legally they are minors or those who cannot speak in court for themselves. Morally and religiously infants must include all children prior to the age of responsibility for wrong doing." But why discuss infant salvation at all if it be decided beforehand that infants are irresponsible, and so not amenable to punishment for sin? This idea of irresponsibility does not comport at all with the explained Calvinistic position which first holds infants guilty on account of Adam's sin and then depraved or subjectively sinful.

But we have shown the covenant of works with its immediate imputation to be a theological blunder, which leaves only the corruption of nature to be accounted for; and if they are not responsible for this, in the sense of being guilty, then they are not punishable at all. But this raises the question, How can depravity fail to render a person guilty? Too much time has been spent in trying to establish the fact that infants are guilty, as if the remedy for their condition could be determined by the natural condition itself. Paul tells us that that condition is one of death. Is it logical to argue that a very large portion of those called to account as infants are condemned finally and eternally because they share the common condition of death which came upon the race? Then why discuss extraneous issues?

Dr. Webb starts out by giving up his case; for in connection with the summing up of the available scriptural data on the subject he makes the damaging admission that "not a single text explicitly and dogmatically tells us what is the fate of infants dying in infancy." (P. 11.) The Scripture he thinks gives us at best only "suggestion, hint, hope"; but we are at last thrown back upon theology, and compelled to settle the matter by inference." It may be asked, Why should theology claim any superior wisdom in the matter? Do the theologians claim a monopoly upon reason and inference? Is not theology itself, if it is worth anything, dependent upon the Scriptures? The fact is that theology thus makes an impertinent claim; and by such attitude becomes a disturbing element in the discussion. If Dr. Webb be a specimen of theology, and its part, we may say that it has drawn false deductions from incorrect interpretations of Scripture; and it winds the matter up by handing out to us a worthless piece of philosophy as the solution of the question. For instance, in the latter part of the chapter on Scripture data the author reasons that "infants dying in infancy are saved by grace because they are incompetent to stand the only sort of judgment which is revealed in Scripture—a judgment according to works. Just below after quoting 2 Cor. 5: 10, he says: "But the infant dies before it can be a doer of either good or bad, and so cannot be arraigned upon the ground of its personal deeds. This is a remarkable piece of logic for any one to use who holds to the doctrine that these same infants, who are not responsible for their own acts, are held responsible for something which was not their personal act at all. Is it any wonder that the anti-revisionist balks at such reasoning? Perceiving

the worthlessness of the gratuitous philosophy which is offered him as the ground of his faith he recurs to the first admission that the Scripture is silent upon the subject, and parades it as an unanswerable argument. But is it a fact that the Scripture has nothing to say upon the salvation of infants in general? We do not admit it, and do not believe it. The statement that the infant cannot be arraigned on the ground of its personal deeds is a false inference based upon a mistaken interpretation of Scripture. It misinterprets the passage in Corinthians and its allied passages by making them teach a scheme of justification by works which is entirely foreign to their meaning and contradictory of the gospel plan of salvation. It is false logic because the converse of a proposition does not necessarily hold good. This is the reasoning: Men are judged according to their works, infants have no works, therefore infants are not judged. The proposition that men are judged according to works was never intended to apply literally to those who have no works, for it has reference to the measure of reward and not to the ground of judgment. All the passages concerning judgment according to works simply teach that men are to be counted either righteous or wicked in accordance with the actual fact of their characters as evinced by their works. If infants then have characters or in other words, moral status, how can such passages exempt them from all judgment. The passages are simply misinterpreted, that is all.

But you do not have to show that infants are guiltless in order to prove that they are saved, any more than in the case of adults, for they are both alike saved by God's grace in Christ. The real question to be discussed is a question of fact, or the Scripture testimony to the fact—Are dying infants all saved—justified in Christ and saved by the Spirit in regeneration? Upon this question of fact the Theology of Infant Salvation offers us only a worthless piece of philosophy: "An infant being a sentient creature is capable of suffering; but being an unconscious creature, with faculties too immature to understand and appreciate the reason for suffering it is incapable of being punished strictly . . . speaking." (P. 288.) This failure on the part of the infant to appreciate his sin and the reason for its punishment "would leave (God's) justice unsatisfied, and defeat the very purpose of the divine being in sending any person to hell." (P. 296.) And so we are left to draw our own conclusion that God will not do so unreasonable a thing as to punish infants in these circumstances, this inference being literally stated at the bottom of P. 290 as follows: Hence the child which on account of its guilt is punishable *de jure*, is not as such punishable *de facto*." The latter must mean simply that guilt will not eventuate in execution. Is this salvation? It is reasoning intended to satisfy a mind bound up in legalism. Is it not as easy to argue the salvation of infants from what we know of God's love as shown in his glorious plan of salvation, as to argue it simply from his justice or his purpose concerning justice?

It seems to be but a poor philosophy which bases a belief in the sal-

vation of infants in the fact that they would not be able to appreciate the meaning of the punishment which is really their due. This is a kind of inability that not many have thought of. This unusual consideration is based upon the philosophical dictum that "Penal suffering, to be strictly penalty, must be recognized as such in the consciousness of the sufferer, else it would be to him unmeaning and causeless pain." (P. 288.) This proposition is one which needs to be proved before being made the basis of such important theological consequences. Who can prove that "the element of awareness is an essential ingredient in rational punishment?" Is it not true that nature's laws are self executing and inexorable, depending not upon the victim's knowledge of those laws? The most ignorant are in fact most liable to incur the consequences of their breach. Fire will burn if a man does not understand its nature just as surely as if he knew but defied the law of combustion.

We think the whole trouble comes from regarding sin simply in a legal aspect as a breach of law, and its consequence as penalty for such breach. Only in such view of the matter is a prenatal guilt thinkable. This is Dr. Webb's conception of the child's condition. See Page 272. He understands Calvinism to assert "an antenatal forfeiture of innocence and righteousness." "Because of this prenatal connection, whether federal or real, every child is born at once guilty and depraved; and therefore condemned; and therefore by nature destined to eternal death. The moral status of every child of Adam is that of a guilty, depraved, condemned thing, amenable to an eternal doom." These expressions betray a one-sided view of sin and death. Paul does not talk in this way. Death was bad enough for him. It was death that "passed through unto all men" and not directly condemnation, although this came from the one trespass. (v. 16.) It was death that reigned over those that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, and not "condemnation" or "eternal doom." How could these be said to reign in view of a provided salvation? A way of life being provided it is no longer legitimate to identify condemnation and eternal doom with guilt. Guilt is a term which describes a moral status, but condemnation and eternal doom are terms of forensic import and imply final judgment; but some Calvinists insist on judging the world before God himself is ready for it. We need not be alarmed by this hasty judging and confusion of things that differ. Paul reassures us when he asks, Who is he that condemneth? It is God that justifieth. God finds a way of taking care of the little ones, and man's condemnation cannot hurt them. We dislike the phrase "decree of nature" and "damnable and damnability" used in this same connection because they are the expression of this confusion.

It is unjust to call this Calvinism. Dabney repudiated the application of the word to such views, denying that the Reformed divines held the extreme views thus advocated.

Calvin himself has been unjustly charged in our church with teaching infant damnation, with only the result of making Calvin contradict himself, because he is made to teach also universal infant salvation. Both

statements are unjustifiable, for Calvin did neither. The first probably grows out of the use of the word "condemnation" in connection with the subject of original sin, the Latin word being improperly translated "damnation." Calvin does not discuss the status of infants outside of the church, and it is not right to stretch his expressions in one or two places beyond the limits of the subject he has in hand. The reference to "some of them whom death removes," etc., in section 19, Ch. 16, must be understood as thus limited. Calvin is less objectionable in his statements than some of his modern interpreters. He is right when he remarks by way of concession that "all the descendants of Adam, being carnal, bring their condemnation into the world with them;" and still he denies that this is any impediment to the communication of a remedy, as soon as ever God is pleased to impart it. If they brought their condemnation into the world with them it certainly could not have been "prenatal." Nor does Calvin adopt the Arminian device of freeing infants as such from the condemnation of original sin, nor free them from personal sin on the score of "irresponsibility." The age of responsibility properly means something very different. It means that God will make allowance for immature faculties and will not hold infants to the responsibilities of grown people. They are saved like every other sinner from the death of sin by the application of the blood of Jesus, and the regeneration of the Spirit which is the newly implanted life, which makes them sons of God.

Calvin denied in express terms that he taught that God "condemned and reprobated impious men before they exist, even before they are impious and have sinned." That was what Castalio charged. But perceiving that Castalio disbelieved in responsibility for original sin Calvin makes the same argument that Paul employs in Rom. 5. In Castalio's view it was unjust to involve the whole race of Adam in the "guilt of original sin." You deny, he says, that it is right for God to condemn any mortal except on account of actual sin," "Countless mortals are taken from life while yet infants. Now put forth your virulence against God, who hurls innocent new-born babes, torn from their mother's breast into eternal death." It seems evident that Calvin turns against Castalio some of his own language employed against the true doctrine of original sin, and that this is only an argument *ad hominem*, and is not intended to assert the eternal death in reality of any infants. The subject in dispute was original sin. This Calvin taught and Castalio denied. Since Castalio with the Pelagians must have denied that death is a penal infliction, this part of his charge against Calvin was an argument *ad hominem*. But Calvin after showing that his views are not merely personal opinion, but Scripture teaching, sends back the same language, charging that it is spoken against God, and not man at all. Calvin has been misunderstood by Dr. Stagg ("Universal Salvation of Infants," p. 100), and made to teach infant damnation as follows: "We interpret this passage as follows: If one denies that God condemns any mortal except for actual sin, he involves himself in the dilemma of either charging God 'with hurling

innocent new born babes . . . into eternal death since countless mortals are taken from this life while yet infants.' Or else he must deny condemnation for original sin, since infants have no actual sin, and declare all infants born in a state of innocency." Let it be noticed that Calvin is here made to reason from the eternal death of infants as a fact, and the only point which he is supposed to cover is the justice of it. The latter part of the so-called dilemma is equally remarkable. To say that Castalio "must deny condemnation for original sin" assumes that Calvin holds the opposite that "infants have no actual sin," when he is trying to show just the reverse that as guilty they have "actual sin" in a true sense. But he does not say that they are really "hurled into eternal death." The turn which Calvin gives to the phrase "actual sin" is entirely missed, and his use of the words of his opponent. The whole is, we take it, an unfortunate misunderstanding which adds to the difficulty of this discussion instead of contributing anything to its solution.

DR. S. S. LAWS ON INFANT SALVATION.

Dr. Laws' booklet of seventy-seven pages makes the latest argument in our church on this subject, although, as we have seen, one quotation from him is made in Dr. Webb's book. Dr. Laws depends mainly upon the classic passages in Matt. 18, and 19, claiming that he makes a somewhat different use of them from Calvin. But after quoting Calvin at length and commending his exposition, he says that as regards his own argument: "Any special virtue" in it "rises from a recognition and due appreciation of the relation of the fourteenth verse of Matthew 18 to the previous discoursing about infants." This is hardly worth the claim since it needs no explanation to point out the connection. He adopts Calvin's error in making a close connection between the two passages, and fails to see Calvin's mistaken interpretation of the phrase "kingdom of heaven." Only when the phrase is understood of heaven itself, the kingdom of glory, does the force of the passage in connection with infant salvation appear, and yet none of the writers has explained this matter properly, although Rev. H. B. Pratt does say that the passage has no bearing on infant baptism. But if the phrase be interpreted to mean heaven itself instead of a present salvation in the visible church, this seems to exclude the reference to the grown people of childlike spirit. This is without warrant read into the passage from Matt. 18, for "Of such" must mean children as children without any direct mention of their spirit as the reason for the saying. Dr. Laws is right in stating that "Calvin nowhere explicitly recognizes the universal salvation of those dying in infancy." Having applied the passage to infant baptism, it is clear that he had in mind only the children of the church who had the right by covenant standing to baptism. Only to this extent can there be an argument made from infant salvation to infant baptism. If we could grant that Calvin's interpretation of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" was correct, and his understanding of the meaning of the cove-

nant relation sound, then we should have to grant his argument to infant baptism valid; but since neither can be granted, this particular passage must be given up as a support to infant baptism. But it is of far more importance to understand it as bearing directly upon infant salvation; and because we are not warranted from the circumstances to limit the passage to the children of the church, it must necessarily embrace all who are taken away from this world as infants. Dr. Laws seems to be wrong therefore in saying that Calvin "builded better than he knew," and "should have the benefit of his inconsistency." An inconsistent exposition is not sufficient for our purpose, and until this is recognized and Calvin ceases to be quoted on this subject we shall not get any very clear ideas on infant salvation; from this passage at least.

Dr. Laws draws an argument from the case of David's child without touching upon the fact that it must have been in a sense at least a child of the covenant. The anti-revisionists have already tried to offset the value of this passage by pointing out this fact. This by the way spoils also the application of the "Jevons canon." P. 45.

He makes the same mistake made by the last writer on the matter of judgment according to works; but seeks to offset the effects of this rule by saying: "There emerges a distinction between the primal judgment on our race for disobedience and the final judgment." And the requirement, "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," is one which is not applicable to infants. P. 46.

And yet the exemption of infants from condemnation is rightly explained to be "not due to the absence of sinful works or practices such as lie to the charge of adults." If this is true, they are under what he calls "primal condemnation," that is, are guilty by reason of their own condition; and it is not necessary to seek to strengthen this condemnation by asserting that "they are to blame for the individual act of transgression done by Adam himself in the garden of Eden." If relieved of this part of the indictment, still they need to be saved by the application of the atonement and the regeneration of the Spirit.

But although Dr. Laws' treatment of the subject may not seem to be unexceptionable, still it is directed to the real issue, and in support of the truth, and is perhaps the best that has yet appeared. We can agree to the opinion that "the Bible facts and teaching . . . warrant us in entertaining a comfortable faith in the universal salvation of infants dying in infancy," by which he doubtless means all such. If it is true as estimated that by far the larger part of the human race die in infancy, it is plain that "the citizenship of heaven will consist chiefly of those redeemed from the ranks of infancy and not of believing adults."

This last fact is employed by a recent writer as the basis of a new scheme of prophetic interpretation.

REV. H. B. PRATT ON INFANT SALVATION.

Seeing a few days ago the notice of a new book entitled "The Buried Nations of the Infant Dead" the writer at once ordered it in the hope of finding something new upon the discussion of infant salvation. We were disappointed to find that with such an universal call for the proof of the infant proposition he adduces only the passage in Matt. 19: 14 and Calvin's interpretation. The only difference seems to be the expression of opinion, with which we heartily agree, that "the words have nothing to do with the ordinance of baptism." P. 13. But this must rest upon the proper interpretation of the passage, and not upon the reasons given in this connection, both of which are unsound. To say that "Christian baptism was not then instituted," by which he means that it was not yet in existence, is not true except in a very modified sense, since infant baptism was a Levitical institution, the law for it being contained in Lev. 12.

The second point, which is, that we confine the ordinance to the children of the church, is beside the mark as proving that the passage in Matt. 19 has nothing to do with the ordinance of baptism.

When by way of comment on the passage he says, "It is more customary to understand the words as teaching that a childlike character and disposition are necessary to enter heaven" we are prepared for a rejection of that interpretation. But no, he simply asks: But is that all, or the half of what our Master intended to teach by these precious words? The implication in this sentence (P. 14) shows that the first sentence is not accurate, for what interpreter ever contended that adults were exclusively referred to? Since Dr. Pratt does not hold that infants are exclusively referred to, we cannot see that he differs from Calvin and other interpreters.

Under the heading "Calvin and Dying Infants" his attempted defence of Calvin and Calvinism against the charge of teaching infant damnation is hardly more successful than his interpretation of Matt. 19. Although he has already called attention to the fact, and drawn an argument from it against Calvin, that we do not give baptism to any but the children of believing parents, he tries to relieve Calvin of teaching infant damnation by pointing to the fact that he taught that dying infants may be saved without baptism. But Calvin was talking of those who had a right to baptism but failed to receive the ordinance. He did not anywhere assert that all dying infants had a right to baptism or that all such are saved. Now then, according to Calvin's interpretation and limited application of the passage it cannot be made to teach without exception the salvation of all dying infants. And yet he charges to the "art and subtlety of Satan and the perversity of human nature" the criticism that the Calvinistic confessional statement involves infant damnation. A good interpretation and solid argument would be far more effective than such method of dealing with this question. He must needs charge a vast multitude with being affected by the subtlety of Satan, for clear thinkers

in all ages have recognized the fact that to assert the salvation of a limited or elect class of dying infants necessarily puts the balance of the dying infant class outside the pale of salvation. It is no answer at all to point out that such criticism has been directed at Calvinists rather than at the Romish church which teaches that baptism is necessary to salvation and that all dying infants unbaptized are lost. P. 16.

On page 17 he makes an admission which is exceedingly damaging to all his own strictures. "We freely confess (he says) that the phraseology, which 300 years ago had probably a reference now lost, is unfortunate and needlessly perplexing, if not misleading." Then what right has he to impugn the honesty of those who interpret the clause differently from what he does? His next sentence simply betrays his own utter inability to understand the problem which the use of "elect" to set off a limited class of dying infants has produced. He says to substitute "elect persons dying in infancy" would be free from all possible misunderstanding." We think that it would make not one iota of difference, for everybody knows without being told that infants are persons. "Non-elect persons dying in infancy" just as certainly carries the implication of non elect infants, unless it be explained that "elect" is used as an attributive of dying infants instead of to limit the class. But it would not be a very natural way to speak of dying infants as a division of the elect to introduce by the phrase "elect persons," so that the old implication stands as the more probable one with this wording.

On page 19 our author tells us that the uassage in Matt. 19 has "application not only to the case of the infants of Christian parents, but to all deceased infants of all ages." But the trouble is he fails to tell us how. Although sympathizing with his position, we cannot but recognize the weakness of the showing he makes for it. He gives us nothing but his own opinions and assertions which are worthless for purposes of argument.

But worse than this, instead of giving us the correct interpretation of the passage he misinterprets both members of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" so as to destroy its effective use as a proof of infant salvation. He is not consistent however for he "does not hesitate to affirm" that when Christ came down from heaven he "left behind him in heaven innumerable millions of the infant dead, who since the advent of sin and death in the world had been gathering there, waiting for the purposed and promised redemption of the people of God in the day of Christ which is emphatically called "the day of redemption, whereunto by his Spirit we are sealed." Eph. 4: 30. See page 23. One would suppose that this implies the true meaning had he not previously told us that the phrase "kingdom of heaven" "perhaps never does mean heaven in the ordinary use of the word as locally distinct from the earth." And he asserts that "the kingdom is locally on earth, and is coming, but not yet come." This is a strange position to take.

If one will turn to the word "kingdom" in the concordance he will see how wide of the truth is such an assertion. The very first use of

the phrase in Matthew refers to the incoming of the gospel dispensation. It was already "at hand" because Christ was immediately to appear. Christ said also "The kingdom of God is within you." In the parables the phrase is constantly used to describe the visible church. It is perfectly natural that it should also be used to express the consummation of the great plan of redemption, the triumph of the kingdom. This is what is meant by the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." And this very passage quoted to prove his contention in reference to heaven proves just the reverse, for the comparison between the conditions on earth and in heaven shows conclusively that our author is wrong in his idea that "heaven" is never used in Scripture in the usual sense. It is thus used in Matt. 18: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of your father who is in heaven." This use cannot be avoided, and he himself so uses it when he represents the millions of infants in heaven as waiting for the future glory. He identifies the kingdom with the "day of redemption," and in so doing misinterprets this phrase; but it hardly comes in the scope of the present purpose to discuss this matter. He gives a hint of the truth when in a rather disconnected sentence he says, "So that when Jesus said, 'Of such is the kingdom of God,' it is not possible that he lost sight of the countless millions of the infant dead he left in glory when he came down from heaven." They are not "lost sight of" for the reason that they are exclusively referred to, and reference to a particular kind of righteous people simply ruins the passage.

Another bad argument needs to be set aside. He seeks to make the promise to Abraham quoted in Hebrews 11 bear upon infant salvation. On page 29 he asks "When then, and in what point of Jewish history, do we find any trace of that already deceased and departed spiritual seed of Abraham, numerous as the sand and as the stars of the sky, except among the infant dead?" The answer to this is: Any one who has a proper conception of the spiritual meaning of the promise will not look for its fulfilment in any point of Jewish history. The promise that the seed should be as the stars, and as the dust of the earth must not be understood simply of the nation of Israel. If this be confined to Israel where is the promise applying to the balance of the spiritual seed? The form in Gen. 17, "a multitude of nations" is simply a form of the same promise. He seems to think that this promise will be satisfied by the infant dead of the nations? This does not seem to be a natural way to interpret prophecy. Referring again to this promise on page 31 he says: "If these were then "more in number than the stars of the sky and the sand by the seaside"—out of one small nation only, what shall we say of the incomparably greater multitudes of the infant dead of all nations?" "The infant dead (he says) of all ages and all nations and peoples will form so immeasurably the greater part . . . of the redeemed and finally saved that it may without exaggeration be said of them: "Of such is the kingdom of God"—chiefly composed of them." There is certainly no reference in this text to any division of the infant dead into nations. It is enough to say that heaven is largely peopled with them.

It is unfortunate that the doctrine of infant salvation must needs be burdened by so many indefensible arguments. Dr. Pratt has an original interpretation of the parables of the Great Supper and The Marriage of the King's Son. The command, "Go ye out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" he regards as having been fulfilled by the bringing in of the infant dead. But this is an impossible interpretation. The phrase "compel them to come in" has been a favorite says Lightfoot with the persecutor and the inquisitor, 'but it seems strange that there should have been drawn from them arguments for any compulsion but a moral one.' But if the appeal was made to those capable of being reached by moral suasion, of course it could not apply to infants. In fact such an interpretation would be out of harmony with the balance of the parable. The rational interpretation is borne out by the parallel parable of the marriage of the king's son. The servants who were sent into the highways were to bid people to the marriage feast. So also the motley crowd which they thus brought in consisting of both bad and good indicates the same thing. So also does the judgment concerning the wedding garment rule out those who are incapable of free moral choice.

It would be a very poor victory for the church to have the wedding filled with guests of a sort that had been brought in by physical causes over which none but God himself has the least control. Such interpretation brings the whole of prophecy into disrepute. And yet just this is the inspiring thought which evidently led our author to write his so-called study in eschatology. We find the heading of the book on page 34. Here Psalm 87 is referred to as one of those prophecies which the conception of universal infant salvation helps to unravel. Zion is represented as the birthplace of the nations, at least such representative nations as Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia, and especially Egypt and Babylon. Besides this Ps. 86: 9 is cited, with Ps. 22: 27: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah, all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Our author likes to dwell upon the first because it seems to him to furnish a ground for the division of the infant dead into nations, and this gives him his title "The Buried Nations of the Infant Dead." But why insist upon a literal interpretation? "All nations" evidently means the whole world, just what is plainly expressed in Ps. 22: "All the ends of the earth." And why should not Egypt and Babylon, and the other nations, familiar to the Jews at the time the Psalm was written, stand as representative of the heathen world? It seems exceedingly unnatural to make these nations to be represented simply by the resurrected infants who died. But this is what our author does. Under the title "The Millennium" (p. 36), he thus presents the matter: It is the purpose of this discussion to show, and I think that before I am done I shall conclusively prove that these predictions in reference to Egypt and Babylon and Philistia, and in a word the other dead and buried nations of the past, both known and unknown, whose infant dead await in their graves the resur-

rection of life . . . and whose spirits in heaven are "waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body" will be fulfilled literally at the resurrection of the just; "and can only be fulfilled by the resurrection of these dead nations, in the persons of their dead babes."

But would the resurrected infants be the nations resurrected? We do not think so. On the other hand, such a method of satisfying the demands of these prophecies eviscerates them completely. It destroys completely the prophecies which teach a millennial triumph for the church when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Dr. Pratt seems to think this a good thing, since there are various irreconcilable ideas as to what this millennial period is, and as to how it stands related to our Lord's coming. But we fancy that the church will not be pleased to be thus lightly robbed of her most glorious hope. It believes in infant salvation but not in such a way as to supersede the church's triumph. It does not come within the present purpose to discuss the millennium, but such association of thought by which the doctrine of universal infant salvation is made to supersede the millennium does not add anything to the discussion of infant salvation.

SCRIPTURES EXAMINED.

Let us now take up the various passages which appear to shed light upon the matter of infant salvation. The classic passage in Mark 10: 14 and Matt. 19: 14 has already received considerable attention in connection with the arguments of others, but it seems to call for a more extended exposition in order to establish what seems to the writer to be the only correct interpretation, and the only one which makes it bear upon universal infant salvation. This exposition was written several years ago and together with several others on the same subject was printed in one of the church papers.

We choose Mark's account of this incident because it is more particular in that it mentions the indignation which the Lord Jesus felt at the effort to prevent the access of the children to him, and also because it brings the teaching concerning the child-like spirit into close connection with the incident. A comparison of the accounts seems to show that this teaching was not confined to any one occasion, but that it was repeated on several occasions. And certainly it was needed, for the disciples were not immune to the temptations of ambition. In spite of the lesson first given in Matt. 18: 3 it had to be repeated in connection with the request of James and John in chapter twenty, and no doubt Mark has correctly introduced the same in connection with the incident of the bringing of the children to Jesus. These children must have included some very small ones, for Luke calls them babes (*brephe*). The purpose of the parents must have been to seek a spiritual blessing for the children, and doubtless they believed it would mean their salvation. Matthew tells us that the purpose was "that he should lay his hands upon them and pray." It is natural to suppose that they

believed such prayers on behalf of the children would be effective. The disciples seem to have thought that they were too young to be considered in connection with the matter of salvation, and this it was no doubt which roused the indignation of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps they had forgotten the significance of circumcision, and the ritual baptism prescribed for them in Leviticus 12, and it is possible that there may have been some in the crowd that were children of Gentiles, who did not seem to the apostles to have any claim upon the Savior's attention. If so, their minds were speedily disabused of the error, for he gives them to understand that not merely was there a peculiar fitness in his receiving them, but there would be a marked incongruity in debarring them from his presence, for of such is the kingdom of God, or heaven.

What now does "Of such is the kingdom of God" mean? We believe that it does not mean what the Revisers have interpreted it to mean by the new translation "to such belongeth the kingdom of God." We do not see how the genitive "of such" can be converted into "to such," especially when the dative in such a situation would more naturally express possession. It is true that the genitive of the personal pronoun is used in Matt. 5:3 and Matt. 5:10, and is translated "theirs," but the personal pronoun lends itself to that translation in a way that "of such" in our passage does not. We think the old translation is superior to the new, and that the substantive verb which has to be supplied carries with it the idea of "composed or constituted." "Of such is the kingdom of God composed or constituted." The phrase kingdom of God or heaven should be taken to mean heaven itself, the kingdom of glory, as in Matt. 18:3, and not of the kingdom of the redeemed on earth, as it is generally understood. We see no reason why this sense of the word with the translation "of them" should not be understood in Matt. 5:3, Blessed is the poor in spirit, for of them (or the same) is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake, for of them (or the same) is the kingdom of heaven." It would then mean, this is the sort of people who go to compose heaven.

This matter is of importance because upon the meaning of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" depends what we get out of the verse. If the Saviour means to say to the disciples "Of just such children as these is the kingdom of heaven constituted," he means to imply not the present salvation of all those children, but that these are as nearest the kingdom precisely the most hopeful material for the kingdom on earth, whereas the disciples adjudged them to be beneath his notice. If this interpretation is correct, we have here an important proof that all who are taken away from this world in the infant state are saved, and no other interpretation yields this important result.

Calvin seems to have been misled in his interpretation by his desire to construct from the passage an argument for infant baptism. Our modern theologians have reproduced his argument without perceiving its weakness in that it rests upon a misunderstanding of the phrase "kingdom of God." Calvin and all our modern writers, as far as we know, have

taken the phrase as descriptive of those who are members of the spiritual kingdom in this world, that is to say, subjects of God's grace.

A quotation from chapter 16, Sec. 7 of the *Institutes* will serve to make Calvin's view clear: "Wherefore the Lord Jesus, to exhibit a specimen from which the world might understand that he was come to extend rather than to limit the mercy of the father, kindly received the infants that were presented to him, and embraced them in his arms chiding his disciples who endeavored to forbid their approach to him, because they would keep those of whom was the kingdom of heaven at a distance from him who is the only way of entrance to it." His idea seems to be that the children were either already in the kingdom by reason of a covenant standing, or that Christ's blessing would have the effect of giving them entrance to the spiritual kingdom. Or perhaps it is more correct to say that he makes both pleas for them, however mutually exclusive they may appear to be. There can be no doubt that he has in mind the children of the church and no others. This is clear from what he says about their covenant standing. Christ came to extend the mercy of the Father in the sense that the covenant with its seal of baptism was broadened out to cover the children of all believers. The covenant standing "belongs to the children of Christians now, as much as it did to the infants of the Jews under the Old Testament." (Sec. 5.)

We do not need Calvin's argument to infant baptism, for there are more solid arguments to be advanced on this subject, but we do need to recognize and accept the true understanding of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" because this together with its complement in Matt. 18:14 clearly asserts the salvation of all who are called to their account as infants. The two passages are not to be taken as directly connected with each other, and there is no reference in "of such" to older people of child-like spirit. Calvin ought never to have admitted this interpretation. It damaged even his argument to infant baptism, but we should reject it because it is inconsistent with the true conception of the saying of Jesus. The saying evidently has reference to children as children, and not to any particular character which they were supposed to possess. Nor is there a reference to a limited class of children as church members. We have no means of knowing whether all the children who came to Jesus were from believing families or not, but it is evidently improper to go upon the supposition that they were, and upon the strength of this to rule out the children of the heathen. Why should not all infant children, called to account as infants, stand upon the same footing? Jesus evidently indicates heaven as the destination of all who are called away from earth at this stage of life. Since they are called away by death, they are designated in the confession as infants who die in infancy. If "elect" had been omitted the expression would of course have included the whole of the class. But in view of the controversy upon this question a clear-cut statement would naturally add "all" by way of emphasis.

INFANT SALVATION ASSERTED IN MATT. 18: 14.

We believe that in Matt. 18: 14 the Lord Jesus clearly asserts that it is the divine will that all who are called to their account as infants shall be saved, for this is the counterpart affirmative of saying that it is not his will that "one of these little ones should perish." The only question is as to who are "these little ones?" It is a strange fact that Meyer so interprets "little ones" as to rule out the little children altogether, making it refer exclusively to older people of a childlike spirit. We think this interpretation is hardly defensible, but the interpretation thus given comes from taking the same phrase in verse 6 in this sense. Let us then first take up this and other verses in the light of the context. In order to teach the disciples a lesson of humility and self-abnegation the Lord Jesus had set before them a little child. Saying in effect "Do you see this little child, unless ye turn about and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." As if this were too general he repeats the simile: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. This is a direct answer to the disciples' question "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" This is to say, Unless you so modify your views and ambitions concerning life and service as to exhibit the spirit of humility and self-abnegation which you see in this child you shall not see heaven at all. The point where Meyer switches off is at verse 5, and he does not state the case correctly, for he says, "The question of the disciples has been answered. But his eye having lighted upon this child who happened to be present, Jesus now seizes the opportunity of inculcating upon them the duty of taking an affectionate interest in such little ones." To say that the child happened to be present and the Savior's eye "lighted upon it" does not represent the fact of the narrative that he expressly put it up for purpose of illustration. The exhortation to take a friendly interest in "such little ones" was secondary to the main purpose. Since the language is "as this little child" (v. 4), it seems quite evident that Meyer uses the term "little ones" here as equivalent to such little children. But in the next sentence he flies the track and leaves the little children entirely out of sight. Commenting upon "such little child" he says: "According to the context not a literal child which would give a turn to the discourse utterly foreign to the connection, but a man of such a disposition as this little child represents—one who with childlike simplicity is humble and unassuming." When he says, "And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me," how can the children themselves be excluded, even granting that the inculcated spirit is the prominent idea? How can an adult of such desirable spirit be styled "a little child" without being classed with the children themselves? It would be contradictory then to exclude them altogether. Now we have in verse 6 the phrase "little ones," and Meyer thinks this is not to be understood of "literal children." He says it is "not to be understood any more than "such child" (v. 5) of literal children, and consequently

not to be used as proof of the faith of little children, but as meaning: "one of those little ones,—a way of designating modest, simple-minded, unassuming believers, that had just been suggested by seeing in the child then present a model of simplicity." It does not seem natural to pronounce so severe a sentence against misleading "one of these little ones that believe on me," if the term little ones does not include those of tender years who would be specially liable to be deceived, for the modesty and humility of believers should not make them liable to deception, or make them easy subjects of temptation.

If we examine the parallel passage in Mark 10, 15, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein"; this seems to indicate that the spirit sought to be inculcated is that of meekness and faith—the faith of the little child trusting a superior wisdom to its own. It is this spirit which the Savior inculcated when he said: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And this may help us understand what the injunction against "despising one of these little ones" means. (Matt. 18: 10.) And also Luke's turn to the passage concerning "receiving the kingdom of God as a little child." (Luke 18: 17.) Receiving the kingdom of God means to accept the truth, and this enables us to understand what Matthew's account means concerning "receiving one such little child" in my name, for receiving the kingdom and receiving members of the kingdom must be close of kin. The latter must mean the recognition of their christian standing, and the witness which they bear by the very fact of their faith. This would apply equally well to humble adult christians and to children as "little ones that believe me." If the believing trustful spirit of such little ones as are capable of an intelligent faith renders them the objects of God's special care, how can these same little ones and all of their class be excluded, when of such tender years as to be incapable of faith? The condition of dependence and helplessness is there all the more, and it is the essence of faith to recognize ones self as in this condition? A natural inability to understand and recognize ones helplessness certainly cannot be in God's sight a reason for excluding such persons from the salvation brought by him who came to seek and save the lost. Would it not be just as unreasonable as to say that the lost wanderer in the snow drifts who has become benumbed and unconscious should not be rescued when found because he is not able to appreciate his condition? Will Christ pass by those sheep which not only do not know the way home but have not yet discovered that they are lost? This surely is not consistent with the prophecy that he will "gather the lambs in his arm and carry them in his bosom." (Isa. 40: 11.)

Now if those who are literally "little ones" cannot be ruled out of the preceding context in Matthew 18, they must be included in v. 14, which positively asserts God's will concerning the little ones. God's special care for them is indicated in verse 10, where it is said that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in

heaven." It would be strange if the little ones most helpless should be ruled out from this guardian care.

Such a text as that of John 3: 18, 19, which teaches that condemnation will come from the rejection of God's plan of salvation appears to exempt infants from condemnation, for this occasion or cause of condemnation does not apply to them. The passage attributes condemnation to the wilful rejection of the truth. Because men loved darkness rather than light they rejected God's salvation and refused to believe. This positive refusal brings condemnation to the world. Now if "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, his purpose being on the other hand, to save the world, he places the responsibility for being lost upon man himself, and surely this implies a probation to all who receive the message and are intelligent enough to apprehend it. It would seem to let out and place in entirely a different class all the human race who have not been guilty of a positive rejection of God's messenger of peace and life. Should not God's purpose to save the world apply to the advantage of all who have not rejected his plan; and amongst these the most unquestionable are those who were called away from this world before they had any opportunity to accept or reject God's plan. As for the adult heathen who do not have God's word, Paul teaches that they will be judged according to the light they have, that is, the light of conscience, so that they do not constitute an exception to the rule of being judged for rejection of the light; the only difference is in the amount of the light. Does not this bring under God's definite purpose of salvation all who walk in darkness and have no light? (Isa. 50: 10.) We think there are passages which proclaim this purpose directly. Is it not better to hold this than to teach as some ultra Calvinists do that the children are condemned by reason of a prenatal connection with Adam? See *Theol. Infant Salvation*, p. 272.

THE LITTLE ONES. NUM. 14: 31.

We think a strong positive argument in favor of the conclusion that judgment is to be according to the light possessed and the ability of the parties in question may be deduced from what God says concerning the little ones in Num. 14: 31. It is true that the passage does not refer to the final judgment, but it is not necessary that it should. The point is that it relieves the little ones of the responsibility for the disobedience and moral guilt of the older people. Since God exempts them from the punishment which he meted out to all the grown up people he makes a clear difference as to their responsibility for the national sin. And the case is made stronger in favor of real infants by the fact that the line was in this case drawn at twenty years. Why should not this obviously righteous principle of judgment be extended to the final judgment, and apply to the status before God as regards sin and salvation? The final judgment really comes to them when they die, and so is simply the application of the same principle in time to the final destiny. It is quite likely that these young people and children agreed

with their parents regarding the report of the spies, and the determination not to go up and take the land. Their unbelief was no doubt the same, and they must have many of them joined in the murmuring objection to doing what God told them to do. But the older ones of the people were punished and the younger exempted. Not because the older children at least were not blamable for their sin, but because God regarded the difference in the maturity of the faculties as making a great difference in the degree of guilt. God was very angry and seemed about to destroy the whole people, but Moses interceded, and the people were simply deprived of the privilege of going into the promised land. He declared that only the little ones for whom they professed such solicitude should go in. If God had really destroyed the whole people as he at first threatened to do, the children would of course have suffered natural death along with the grown people; but the same difference of responsibility must have obtained as was afterwards made, and there seems no reason to doubt that this would have secured salvation to the little ones. The promise of the land was typical of the promise of salvation in heaven, and if any were saved as the true seed of Abraham it must have been the infant children of Abraham who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression? Here we have the difference in the responsibility established by God's own act and judgment, and this is a very different thing from simply assuming such irresponsibility. An interpretation of the second commandment has come down from the past which makes the children to be held accountable for their father's sins; but the interpretation is incorrect and contradicts the plain and positive teaching of Ez. 18, which deals with the matter of the final judgment. The meaning of the second commandment may be illustrated by the supposed case above. If God had carried out his threat and destroyed the people for their sin he would have in a true sense "visited the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, but this would be by the operation of natural laws, and would have no reference to final accountability for sin. Another case of the application of the rule would be where the parent entailed upon his children the physical disability which he had induced in himself by his own imprudence and sin. This furnishes no basis whatever for the assertion of infant damnation.

That the principle of exemption of the little children does apply to the final judgment is corroborated by our Lord's teaching in Luke 12: 48 that "to whosoever much is given of him shall much be required." The servant who knows his Lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, but he who knows it not and does things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. His lack of knowledge was of course not entirely innocent, but in the case of the infant the same rule will apply by an a fortiori argument to exempt them from all punishment. It is a great mistake therefore to say that the Scripture is silent on so important a matter. Paul instanced an application of this truth to the heathen world when he said to the Athenians upon the Areopagus, "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked, but now he commandeth

men that they should all (everyone) everywhere repent." As regards the heathen who had never had the advantage of instruction in the things of God Paul teaches still more definitely in Romans 2: 12 that "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law." Is it not easy to draw an a fortiori argument from this to the infant? And yet they tell us that the Bible is silent on the matter of infant salvation.

In Isaiah 5: 3, 4 God appeals to men's natural sense of right to support the principle that responsibility and opportunity must be commensurate. "What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" This shows us that where there has been no seed-sowing and preparation for a harvest the harvest is not to be expected. Any other principle would necessitate a change in the parables of the pounds and the talents, so that even if nothing was given in the way of capital with which to trade, the Lord would yet come back and demand bricks without straw all the same. God professes to be not unreasonable in his judgments, he does not require the impossible.

GENESIS 4: 6, 7.

As illustrative of the same principle of judgment as regards the young we have the incident recorded in Genesis 4: 6, 7. It is exceedingly instructive as showing God's tender consideration for the first erring child, or young man, under the dominance of a hot head. Cain was already jealous of his brother because Abel's sacrifice and worship had been accepted while his own will worship with an unbloody sacrifice had been rejected. This made him very angry. Our passage gives us God's warning and remonstrance concerning the indulgence of such a state of mind. "Why art thou wroth?" he says, "and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, will it not be lifted up," or more literally, "If thou doest well, is it not (natural or characteristic) to lift it up?" His countenance was an infallible evidence of a bad state of mind and heart. This was due to sin. "And if thou doest not well sin croucheth at the door." Its evil desire is upon thee, but do thou control it." Notice that here is a kindly warning concerning evil passions experienced for the first time by any member of the human race, for Cain was the first child to be born a sinner. God deals with the erring boy as an earthly parent, if wise, would do. He appeals to his consciousness and his conscience to show him that the source of his unhappiness lies in his own sinful heart; and then he makes his appeal to the better nature to induce him to control himself on principles of righteousness. Self-control is the great lesson of life which all need to learn, and here in the very beginning we have the true psychology taught that sin in its beginning lies in the evil desire of the heart. Here is the secret of that moral perversion, that death which Paul tells us "passed unto all men." The word "desire" here used is the same sense as that in Gen. 3: 16: "Thy desire is (not shall be)

to thy husband," that is, he possesses your sinful desire which you induced in him by your temptation to eat the forbidden fruit, and "he will rule over thee" in a way which will be anything but pleasant and desirable.

If Cain had been grown at the time of this incident, having a conscience properly instructed as regards good and evil, we should expect sharp rebuke instead of kindly warning; so that God's treatment in this case is instructive as showing his sympathy with poor fallen human nature in its weakness, especially when the faculties are still immature. He gives Cain instruction in time to have prevented his great sin had he only given due heed to it. This treatment of the first erring child furnishes another argument *a fortiori* to show that God does not hold little children to the responsibility of grown people. Cain was not free from sin and responsibility for his improper worship of God. Adam and Eve must have instructed Cain and Abel alike, and Cain must have known as well as Abel that bloody offering was required "from the firstlings of the flock with the fat thereof" at the end of the days that is, in the appointed time, so there was no excuse for his arbitrary will worship; nor was he reasonable in being angry against God for not accepting his offerings, much less justified in his mean jealousy and hatred of Abel because he was more righteous than himself. But God deals with the erring child very tenderly, and this shows that he recognizes different degrees of guilt and makes due allowance for immature faculties. If judgment is according to light, where there is no light there can be no judgment, but mercy will rejoice against judgment.

Since the force of our argument depends upon the recognition of the fact of Cain's youth, let it be noted that in addition to the mild treatment he received his youth seems to be indicated by the fact that the warning was entirely disregarded. He evidently decoyed his brother out into the field apart from the house and killed him before his heat of passion had had time to cool. That he was a hot-headed youth seems to be indicated also by his impertinent reply to God's question, "Where is Abel thy brother?" His reply, "Am I my brother's keeper," seems to indicate thoughtlessness and impetuosity instead of the heaven-daring wickedness of the hardened sinner. His brooding over the non-acceptance of his sacrifice seems to indicate that he was not at the time so hardened as not to be disturbed by the lack of God's favor. We may find a hint of his youth also in the fact that his marriage, recorded after this, in the land of Nod, must have taken place long after the murder and the flight from home. We think, therefore, that God's fatherly treatment of him is clearly to be accounted for on the score of his inexperience, and, therefore, it bears upon our subject. The natural fatherhood which is here so impressively exercised to give warning of impending sin and danger will no doubt be exercised by God in "turning his hand to the protection of the little ones," who on account of their freedom from actual transgression will have the benefit of his fatherly care unembarrassed by his judgship.

NUMBERS 31: 18.

This passage appears to be in some sense a parallel to Num. 14: 31, for this exempts children of a certain class from the sins and disabilities of heathendom and actually incorporates them in a block into the church. It is true that the male children are excluded from this favor, and this no doubt because the integrity of the Jewish church demanded it. The men when they developed from boyhood would become heads of families, and if they retained their heathen ideas they would prove to be a serious disturbance and menace to the purity of Israel, but the girls could be incorporated without this danger to the church, and so God directs that this class of the Midianite children be saved alive while the balance of the people are exterminated. Those who were incorporated had to undergo ceremonial purification, and thus they were introduced to the church by a sort of infant baptism. Of course, this indicated that they had access to all the rights and privileges of the church, and God's purpose must have embraced them equally with the Jews themselves in his plan of salvation. This shows that salvation was not intended from the first to be confined to the Jews, and that God was ready to save at this time as many of the heathen as could be reached without the overthrow of his plans for building up a church which should in time be commissioned to proclaim his salvation to the world. His extension of such privileges to the heathen children does not lose its moral significance by the fact that only females were included. It goes to show that God did not discriminate against the heathen children simply because they were heathen children, and this is what the advocate of "elect infants" insists upon doing. There is no reason then, in the nature of the case, why God should confine his salvation to the infants of the church to the exclusion of the heathen. These heathen children, although not born with any right to baptism, were purified along with the men of war who took them to adopt them into their families. Since the church stands for salvation, may not the incident be considered typical of God's granting salvation to the heathen children?

DEUTERONOMY 31: 12, 13.

This conclusion is rendered more probable by Deut. 31:12, 13, by which those who were old enough to learn might receive instruction in the truth of God. Once every seven years, in the year of release in the feast of tabernacles, all the people were to be assembled to hear the law read, and all the sojourners, were to be thus assembled "that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law, and their children who have not known, may hear and learn to fear Jehovah your God." Here is the separate mention of the children, announcing a special reference in this meeting to them. He designed that they should learn the truth to their salvation.

We cannot say that God had a care for only those who were old enough to be instructed, and why should not we learn from this passage his general care for heathen children? Must he not take care of the dying infants of the heathen just as he takes care of the same class connected with the church?

God's care for the heathen children is again taught by a passage in Jonah. God reasons against the prophet Jonah, who was grievously disappointed that his prophesied destruction of the city had not taken place. He had evidently taken God's message too literally, and was more concerned for his own reputation as a prophet than he was in the conversion of Nineveh. Jonah's "gourd" having perished, he was made to feel and manifest a very great regard for his own comfort, so much so that God uses this as a means of bringing home to him his own selfishness and inconsistency. "And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?" By "persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left" is indicated infants of tender years who had no knowledge of good and evil. This saying clearly implies that they were not accountable for the general wicked condition of the city, and if they were not accountable, how can it be conceived that had the destruction of the city actually taken place and they had been involved in the general destruction, they would have been held to a final account as sinners. If not accountable before the destruction, how could they be accountable after it? Of course, their exemption from condemnation would not be a complete account of their salvation, for sin is not merely a liability to punishment, but a condition of death, but God intervenes in behalf of the little ones to give them life. If this lesson of the exemption of the infants, so strikingly impressed upon Jonah, had been properly appreciated by the world, we should have an end to those false interpretations of the second commandment which makes them to be held accountable for the fathers' sins. But God's promise to take care of the little ones is definitely made in our next passage.

ZECHERIAH 13: 7.

"Awake, O my sword, against my shepherd, and (rather even) against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered, but I will turn my hand to (or towards) the little ones." Here we have a prophecy of Christ's atoning sacrifice introduced in advance of the prophecy of judgment upon the wicked and going to account for the fact that judgment would not fall upon the whole people. We read, "but the third shall be left therein." Before pronouncing this judgment it is specially declared that the little ones are not included. Therefore, the third which escapes the threatened judgment cannot include the little ones. Since, however, this prophecy is of judgment upon the wicked as such, the exemption of the little ones places them amongst the saved. Will it be said that the prophecy has reference to an

earthly judgment because it says, "In all the land two parts shall be cut off and die." The answer is, this is not sufficient to show that any literal, natural destruction is meant, the reference to refining the third part in the fire as silver shows that it is to be taken as strictly figurative and as having reference to salvation. This being the case, the exemption of the little ones is a direct prophecy of their salvation, and it is not to be denied that it is the little ones out of the wicked that are expressly excepted. If this is not a declaration that the dying infants of the heathen will be saved, it will be impossible to furnish anything to satisfy the advocates of the infant damnation of the heathen children. This passage should be brought to bear upon those in Matt. 18 and 19, for it shows that the doctrine of infant salvation contained in those declarations of the Saviour was an ancient doctrine instead of being new or strange.

ISAIAH 40: 11.

In connection with the passage in Zechariah should be studied the prophecy of Isaiah 40: 11, which seems to be a definite declaration of Christ's attitude as Saviour towards the little ones.

It is true that Dr. Alexander sees in it a broader scope embracing God's care over his people in Old Testament times, but the context is strongly in favor of its definite reference to Christ in his character of Saviour. This seems to be beyond doubt when it is reflected that the message put into the mouth of the messenger is the advent of God himself. The advent of Christ the God-man was the only fulfilment of such prophecy. According to John the evangelist, there could be no other: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten God (critical text) who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (manifested) him." (See Westcott and Hort.) He was announced by John's peculiar message, "Behold Jehovah cometh," and "Behold your God." This corresponds with the apostle's statement in the very beginning that the Word was God, and with John the Baptist's testimony, "This is the Son of God."

The fact that our passage is John's message is obscured by the neglect of the Hebrew genitive (construct state). The speaker in v: 9 is "the evangelist of Zion," not "the teller of good tidings to Zion." "Evangelist" corresponds exactly with the meaning of the Hebrew word, and it is the only single English word that does. The evangelist of Zion was directed to "get up into a high mountain" that from this exalted pulpit he might proclaim the world-wide message announcing the Saviour of the world. It is true it was to be announced first to the "cities of Judah," but it is also true that it was the same message spoken of in verse third in its world-wide aspect. "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah, make level (or straight) in the desert a highway for our God." It was intended that "all flesh" should behold the revealed glory of Jehovah. Of this Jehovah, who can be none other than the Christ, it is said: "He will feed his flock like a shepherd (or shepherd his flock), he will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his

bosom." His gathering the lambs in his arms and carrying them in his bosom expresses the tenderest personal care for the little ones. It clearly implies infant salvation, and yet they tell us the Bible is silent on this subject.

THE WORDING OF THE CLAUSE.

The elect infant clause should be changed in its wording so as to express clearly a belief in general infant salvation. The word "elect" will have to be dropped, for it is in its nature a limiting word when used, as generally understood, to draw a line in the class of dying infants. It seems more natural to take "elect" as a characterization of the whole of the two exceptional classes of dying infants and idiots, but this has not been the accepted view, and any other use of elect necessarily implies the counterpart of the non-elect element of these same classes. It is impossible to use a limiting word without drawing limits, that is, making a division in these classes. The only remedy, therefore, is to omit the word. But in some other way it must be indicated that these classes are treated of in this chapter as divisions of the elect, for it takes these to make the number of the elect complete. Moreover, they are exceptional classes because not included in the first statement concerning all the elect effectually called "by his word and Spirit." Section 3, as it stands, is a saving clause which is necessary to make the first statement accurate, because it is not true that God effectually calls by his word and Spirit "all those whom he predestinated unto life." The two classes in question are saved without the word, and without the outward call. This should be stated in immediate connection with the first statement, if that is allowed to stand unmodified, instead of being placed in the third section where its relation to section one is lost sight of. It might be stated thus: "The whole number of the elect embraces two classes who are incapable of being called by the word, namely, infants dying in infancy, and older persons born with impaired intellects. These are saved by the Spirit alone in regeneration, who is just as able to work this change without means as with the aid of outward instrumentalities." This gives a more definite description than to say that they are incapable of the outward call. To say that they are "born with impaired intellects" shuts out the criminally insane. If idiots are not to be directly named, the designation should be sufficiently specific to be easily understood. Besides this, the method of their salvation by a direct application of the Spirit's saving work should be stated, for this is the principal part of the statement. To say that they are "saved by the Spirit" is not sufficiently definite. Since the Spirit must give the life to infants just as to adults, in advance of faith and repentance of which these are the expression, there is no excuse for the indefinite phrase, "worketh when and where and how he pleaseth."

If it is thought best to treat these exceptional classes in a separate section, it should be brought into immediate connection by the omission of section two which contains no new matter except the easily misunder-

stood statement that men are "passive" under the call. It rests upon a false analogy comparing the spiritual life to a new creation in a literal sense. But the spiritual life is not a literal creation but the renovation of the moral dispositions, and to speak of being thus renovated while passive is to talk in contradictory language. How can a body be rightly disposed without being disposed at all? This is to talk nonsense. This language should be eliminated because it is generally misunderstood as excluding any acting of the human spirit; and this is false.

DR. WEBB'S INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS.

By way of giving emphasis to the necessity for eliminating "elect" as a characterization of dying infants, let us examine Dr. Webb's treatment of this question. On page 284 of his *Theology of Infant Salvation*, he makes a classification of (a) elect infants, and (b) non-elect infants. Since this covers the whole of humanity, the term elect infants is made equivalent to the elect in general, and, therefore, the word "infants" has no significance. It might just as well be left out, because infants are persons, and "elect persons," or simply "the elect," would be a more natural expression of this thought. If "elect infants" in the Confession stood by itself, this would be perhaps a possible interpretation, but such is not the case. "Dying in infancy" is the description of a particular class of infants, all others being left out of the thought; and elect as a further modification of the idea makes a division of this class into elect and non-elect. The terms by this restriction take on an entirely different meaning from the purely abstract and broad division which Dr. Webb attributes to Calvinism. It is useless to introduce the term Calvinism here as a term to juggle with, for *Theology* in general makes no such division. There is no call for such division of mankind at the time of infancy.

To say that "elect infants," whatever comprehension the term may have, share the atonement, and regeneration goes without saying. Since the election spoken of is an election to salvation, it goes without saying that they are saved in the only way that men can be saved. These add nothing to the analysis or interpretation. Now our author goes on to say: "The critic of the Calvinist insistently and naggingly asks the question, What would be the final fate of an infant in class (b), if he should die in infancy? Not waiting for the Calvinist to reply, that the question is purely hypothetical and impossible, the critic answers his own question by announcing to the world, (a) that Calvinism admits that some non-elect, non-redeemed, non-regenerated infants die in their infancy, and (b) that Calvinists teach that there are 'infants in hell a span long.' This puts into the critic's mouth something which he never thought of, much less asked, for he goes on no such analysis and understanding of 'elect dying infants.' If elect infants die infants, how can the conclusion be reached that the non-elect class necessarily lives on? This is a *now sequitur*. Therefore, this dodge is unavailing, and the

question is not one of analysis but of interpretation as to what is meant by 'elect infants dying in infancy?'"

This attempted dodge of the Calvinist is in conflict with the preceding context in section one, which speaks of the whole of the elect as persons called by the word. What would be the propriety of making a second reference to the same division of humanity under the designation of elect infants? Again, if dying infants are all elect, where is the utility of such a classification? Then, why not acknowledge that only those who die in infancy are styled "elect infants"? Nobody knows that any others are such when infants, why talk about something we know nothing about? If Calvinists teach that "as a matter of fact no reprobate infant does or can die in its infancy," then clearly only those who do die at this stage of life should be termed "elect infants." Otherwise the word "infants" has no significance.

Dr. Webb says: "Of elect infants, some die in infancy and some grow to maturity." Then says that the former are saved "because they were elected by the Father" and "that they would have believed . . . had they lived to moral maturity." All this is beside the mark, and is simply truism if known to be elect. He says, p. 285: "Of reprobate infants it is held (a), that none of this class die in infancy, but (b) that they all come to maturity and express the evil that is in them by sundry voluntary and conscious acts of transgression."

But the trouble is, this is the author's own gratuitous supposition which he gives nothing to sustain. The only hint that he here gives of the mental process by which he arrives at his conclusion is found on the following page (286), where he tells us there "must be a difference between the death of a conscious and an unconscious being." This means that he simply assumes the point which he wishes to prove; this, after boldly acknowledging that the burden of proof rested upon him. What follows shows that by "unconscious" he means an inability to apprehend the meaning of penal suffering. Since we have before spoken of this attempted explanation, we need not repeat it here. The hypothesis that there can be no penalty inflicted upon those who are unable to understand its nature, is itself a gratuitous supposition offered to support another supposition. This is the flimsy logic by which the doctrine of infant salvation is sustained in this pretentious work. It reminds one of the saying of the Latin poet, "The mountains laboured and a ridiculous mouse was brought forth."

But the negative argument by which the author of the *Theology of Infant Salvation* tries to avoid the implication of non-elect dying infants is equally unsatisfactory. On page 309 he tells us that "All anti-Calvinists assail it (the elect infant clause) as grossly incorrect in fact, and fiercely arraign it as implicating that some non-elect infants die in infancy and finally perish." He contends that they reach this result "by playing upon the phraseology of this great document."

His answer is contained in three so-called "installments," but instead of being separate points they are all virtually one and the same, which con-

sists of a denial of the correctness of the inference. If it is a necessary inference it is both correct and "legitimate." Here again we have merely a repetition of unsupported assertions. His first assertion is that the inference charged against the confessional clause is "their own inference." This means, of course, that it is incorrect and not such as a sound reasoner would draw. This is a pretty bold statement since he himself says above that "all anti-Calvinists" draw this conclusion. His claim, therefore, is that only Calvinists have discernment enough to understand the language, and logical power enough to draw a correct conclusion from it. It would hardly be possible to make a more conceited claim, or a more self-destructive contention. Not any more powerful argument for revision of the clause can be constructed than his assertion that nobody but Calvinists can understand the language. What is a creed for but to make other people understand what we believe. If they can't understand our language, common sense dictates that the very purpose of a creed cries out against the retention of such language. It makes comparatively little difference whether the claim that it is incorrectly understood be true or not, the stubborn fact which is acknowledged by Dr. Webb himself is, that it is not understood as conveying the meaning desired. His claim in this connection that "The text of the document nowhere from beginning to end asserts that any non-elect infants die in infancy," is just another way of asserting that nobody but Calvinists can understand the language. The repetition which is contained in the assertion that the "confession is absolutely silent everywhere about non-elect infants" is nothing more than the impertinent assertion that nobody but Calvinists can draw an inference. This ignores the fact that many Calvinists themselves see and acknowledge the justice of the inference. We answer the assertion by the counter-assertion that if "elect" limit the class spoken of, it is not merely a correct but a necessary inference from the singling out of an elect class of dying infants. It of necessity creates in the mind the conception of the remainder of the broad class of dying infants which by antithesis must be the non-elect just as certainly as they failed to participate in the election. This places the emphasis upon "elect" while "dying in infancy" is taken in the attributive or explanatory sense, making the phrase equivalent to "elect dying infants." Of course, if a certain number of dying infants are exclusively chosen to salvation, the balance are not so chosen and are non-elect and not saved. The only question then concerns the use of the word "elect," whether it is employed to limit the subject, namely, dying infants, or whether it be intended as an attributive of the whole class of dying infants. The other interpretation which is so common and which is adopted by Dr. Webb we cannot regard as at all tenable. It takes "dying in infancy" as a limiting phrase which marks out a smaller number from the larger class of "elect infants," the latter being taken as equivalent to "the elect." This appears to the writer to be exceedingly unnatural and untenable, because the designation of the whole of the elect as "infants" is little short of absurd. Why use the word at all when "the elect" would express it both more

clearly and more elegantly. We see no escape from the conclusion that the phrase dying in infancy is used in an explanatory sense to indicate what is meant by "elect infants." There is no propriety in speaking of grown people as "elect infants," but it is very natural that having used the term "elect infants" it should be immediately guarded from misunderstanding by definition.

Dr. Webb's third so-called "installment," in which he seeks to show that the inference of non-elect infants is illegitimate because the section designs to explain the method of infant salvation, is beside the mark. It has no pertinency to the case. The question of who are spoken of as being saved, and the question of how these are saved, are entirely separate questions.

Such a perspicacious thinker as R. L. Dabney perceived clearly that no attempted explanation can give relief from the charge of teaching possible infant damnation; and so, in his review of Bledsoe, he devotes considerable space to defending the justice of infant damnation,—how successfully need not here be pronounced upon. But while Dabney thought the Bible silent on universal infant salvation, and while he, therefore, sought to justify infant damnation, he winds up his discussion of this question by the statement that "No man can prove from the Scriptures that any infant, even dying a pagan, is lost." We say, then, by parity of reasoning nobody can prove that there is an elect class of dying infants. And if so, when we talk about a special limited class of dying infants, we talk about something we know nothing about.

Dabney tried very hard to avoid the charge of Bledsoe against the supralapsarian divines of the Calvinistic school, of teaching infant damnation, but his defense by which he seeks to make the whole brunt of this charge fall upon Gomarus and Twisse to the relief of the Confession, is not successful. It matters little that Turretin has opposed such "ultraisms," the Confession is unhappily inconsistent with itself, for some of its most objectionable statements have a supralapsarian ring, and undoubtedly had their origin in the supralapsarian Lambeth confession. But without pressing this matter, it may be said that the implication of possible infant damnation itself involves the supralapsarian theory, for if God consigns to perdition a great part of the human race before they become of intelligence to understand the invitations of the gospel, are they not in effect created to be damned? The short way and best way to put an end to all such charges and implications is to change the wording of the clause.

REVISION OF CHAPTER SEVEN.

In connection with our study of the covenant of works, attention was called to the very general sense in which the word covenant is used in chapter 7 of the Confession. And besides this, the apparent discrepancy between the correct statement of the Larger Catechism and that of the Confession itself was pointed out. This want of harmony, and the

ambiguity which gives rise to the theological conception of the covenant of works, should be remedied. It is of little worth to remedy the elect infant clause while leaving other and more far-reaching errors or ambiguities in the Confession. Let us see how the confessional statement of chapter seven might be harmonized with the superior statement of the Larger Catechism. It was said in the early part of this discussion that the Larger Catechism used the word "covenant" in the sense of a dispensation of God's providence. We might say that it is identified with the law itself as a dispensation of Providence. Question 97 speaks of the regenerate as "delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works so as they are thereby neither justified or condemned." It must be admitted, therefore, that the covenant here is the law considered as a rule of life. The language is somewhat misleading, implying as it seems to do, that for the world it was offered as a means of justification or of condemnation, which is not true, because, as we have insisted, it never was offered as a means of (final) justification. But the point is now that law in this aspect is termed indiscriminately a "covenant of works" and a "covenant of life." The section then goes on to explain other purposes in the giving of the law, which go to emphasize its providential character. It is this providential aspect which justifies, if anything can, the use of the word "covenant." If now it is clearly recognized that this is the perfectly general use of the word which does not conflict with its special use of a promise to which God attaches his oath, no harm can be done by its use. That the Confession itself uses "covenant of works" in the sense of "dispensation of law," like the Larger Catechism is clear from Sec. 6, Ch. 19, which employs the same language as that of Qu. 97, except that the phrase, "to be thereby justified or condemned," carries still more clearly the objectionable inference, that it is offered to the world in general as a means of final justification. (To avoid this, "continually" should be added before "justified.") The impression is strengthened by the statement in Sec. 2, Ch. 7, that "therein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." It doubtless only means that life was assured to Adam and similarly to every member of the race, so long as perfect obedience was rendered. But the word "promised" gives rise to the idea of future instead of present reward, and creates the impression that "eternal life or a condition of indefectibility is meant. The inference is unwarranted and erroneous and should be avoided. This can be easily done by substituting "assured" for "promised," at the same time striking out "in him." "Through him" would be correct perhaps, but both are superfluous and had better be left out. Only one other change, and that is the insertion of "perpetual." This makes the harmony perfect and puts the section beyond criticism.

Section three should be corrected also. The expression, "made himself incapable of life," is not happy as expressing the condition subsequent to the fall. It is not accurate any more than to say that the suicide has made himself incapable of life. "Incapable" is not the word to describe

a condition of death, it is nonsense. It should read "Man having by his fall brought himself into a condition of spiritual death, etc."

But more serious still is the criticism to be made of the last statement of Sec. 3, which apparently confines the promise of the Holy Spirit to "those that are ordained unto life." This is not the language of Scripture, which specially promises the Holy Spirit "to them that ask him." Luke 11: 13. Even though it should turn out that those who ask are precisely such as were ordained unto life, this does not justify the substitution of a theological for a scriptural statement, for the fact that they come to be in practice the same is not by any means apparent to all those to whom the promise is made, for it is intended for the world and not for an unknown limited number. But perhaps some will be inclined to ask whether the confessional statement is not justified by Ezek. 26: 26, 27, which is given as a proof-text to sustain it. We do not think so, for while it is true that regeneration is referred to in the promise of Ezekiel 36, it is also true that it was spoken to the natural Israel in their state of apostasy, therefore, the promise was intended for the wicked as well as the righteous, in other words, for the natural Israel as a people instead of the spiritual Israel as such. Therefore, it does not justify the confessional viewpoint, but just the reverse. This is one of the most objectionable statements in the whole range of the Confession. By all means let it be corrected.

While this is being done the first section should be revised, because its statement is misleading if not positively untrue.

How can the distance between the creature and God be a barrier to man's enjoyment of God unless that distance be conceived as a moral one caused by man's fall? If this is what is meant by the distance being so great, we must say that the language is so indefinite as to be misleading, for this must apply first to the state before the fall, and, therefore, to the natural relation. In this view of the matter the statement seems to be a gratuitous piece of philosophy, which is positively false. On the other hand, must it not be necessarily true that so long as man maintained his holiness he must have enjoyed his correct relation to his Creator and Lord. But sin came in as the separating force which robbed man of his happiness by disturbing his relation to God and his holy law. Holiness would itself have constituted man's "blessedness and reward," just as sin constituted its own misery and punishment. Furthermore, the word "condescension" is too indefinite to describe the attitude of forbearance and grace which led God to withhold his wrath and devise a remedy for man by which he might be brought back to his estate of happiness and holiness by being restored to harmonious relations to God. Then to say that God was "pleased to express his condescension by way of covenant" is too indefinite, for the word "covenant" is not easily understood without definition, as we know by experience in our church in which, as we have seen, the theologians define it in a very different way from the sense intended here. We have pointed out the two separate and distinct meanings, and yet here they are embraced under

the single word "covenant" in the abstract. It would seem that the first statement should confine itself to the administration of grace after the fall, since the subject is not creation but redemption. Therefore, no need to apply the word "covenant" to the relation of man to God in the Garden of Eden prior to the fall. This would avoid the confusion of two separate meanings of the same word in close connection without definition.

DOES GENERAL INFANT SALVATION CONFLICT WITH THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION?

The impression exists in the minds of some who have undertaken to write on the subject of infant salvation, that the doctrine of universal infant salvation conflicts with the doctrine of an unconditional election. This is a mistake, the error being in the wrong understanding of the word "conditional." This leads to an examination of the clause of chapter three, which teaches unconditional election. And let us inquire whether this misunderstanding as to the relation of election to conditions does not grow out of the ambiguity of the clause in question. The clause reads: "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." This was formulated to oppose the opposite, or supposedly opposite, doctrine of conditional election. But we think that the two are not really opposite, but different views of truth which are not really in conflict. What is meant when it is said that God "hath not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." The conditions are such as have relation to the subject, and the meaning is that God's decree of election does not wait upon, so as to be shaped by, previously conceived conditions. The matter is at bottom only a question of our analysis of God's thought. Now, while it is true that God's purpose to effectuate anything must come first in thought, it is also true that that purpose is embodied in a plan which is comprehensive and takes into consideration the operation of all the second causes which come into the working of the plan. This is really all that the Arminian contends for—an election which is not divorced from God's knowledge of second causes. To speak of these second causes as "contingent," as is done in Sec. 1, is hardly in place in a statement which speaks of the decree from God's point of view. Contingency respects only man's viewpoint and imperfect knowledge, and does not apply to God's knowledge at all. It would be better probably to say "nor is the place and influence of second causes taken away but rather established."

It would be well to excise Sec. 2 altogether, for it is really in conflict with Sec. 7, which tells us that the "rest of mankind," the non-elect wicked, were "ordained to dishonor and wrath for their sin." If we have a relative or conditional reprobation, why should election take no account of character? And yet this is the impression that is made upon the uninitiated by Sec. 5 also, which speaks of the "predestinated" as

"chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of God's mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works," "as conditions or causes moving him from thereunto." This is the practical application of the statement of Sec. 2, and it shows how misleading is the purely abstract view of the decree. The phrase, "chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory," appears to stand for salvation, while the succeeding clauses announce that it proceeds from God's love without any foresight of faith or good works." This is seemingly a perverted view of salvation which asserts a salvation "without faith or good works." This is an abstract and supposedly philosophical statement of election, which is misleading because it is so different from the scriptural view which asserts that God hath "chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This is the practical view as opposed to the abstract and philosophical view.

Since section 1 treated upon the subject of the Decrees, section 3 ought properly to treat that special form of decree termed "election," but it is introduced with the rather inappropriate word "predestination." "Some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life." The word "foreordained" is used in connection with that portion of the world which have their portion in "everlasting death." These words might well exchange places, for "foreordain" is the word which corresponds to the meaning of the Greek word used in connection with the salvation of the righteous. It is so translated in the Revised Version, and so it may well now displace the less appropriate word "predestinate." The word "foreordain" calls to mind something more than the bare fact of the purposed end, the salvation of the righteous. It reminds us that the work is of God, who by his arrangement of second causes and the superintendence of his Holy Spirit, brings about the desired result. But "predestinate" is better used in connection with the destiny of the wicked, because God does not actively decree or accomplish their adverse attitude and fate, and it would simply express the fact of the fate which they are allowed to work out for themselves. The persistent cavil against the creed on this matter is to be accounted for by the extremely brief statement of election which does not make such necessary distinction, and the failure makes a false impression which misrepresents God, for he expressly says: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Therefore, the criticism is that here again we have the bare bones of theology, instead of the statement of practical religion. A clear distinction should be made between God's active decree to give a blessing and his permissive decree to permit an evil.

The following is suggested as a scriptural statement: "Before the foundation of the world,¹ God purposed² for the praise of the glory of his grace,³ to elect⁴ and call⁵ certain members of the fallen race of man⁶ to eternal life, by the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,⁷ while at the same time purposing to suffer the wicked,⁸ by their own self-will and rebellion,⁹ to fit themselves¹⁰ for the destruction of ungodly

men,¹¹ in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."¹²

Under reference 1 quote or cite Eph. 1: 5; 2 Thess. 2: 13; Matt. 25: 34; John 17: 22, 24; 1 Pet. 1: 20; Rev. 13: 8; Rev. 17: 8; Cf. 20: 15; 2 Tim. 1: 9.

Ref. 2—Eph. 3: 10, 11; Eph. 1: 9, 11; Rom. 8: 28; 2 Tim. 1: 9.

Ref. 3—Eph. 1: 6, 12, 14; Rom. 3: 24-26; Rom. 4: 10; Rom. 5: 2, 15, 17; Luke 2: 30, 32; cf. Luke 2: 14; Luke 19: 38; Rom. 9: 23; 2 Cor. 1: 20; 2 Cor. 3: 8, 9; 2 Cor. 4: 15; Phil. 1: 11; Col. 1: 26, 27; Rev. 19: 7.

Ref. 4—Eph. 1: 4; 2 Thess. 2: 13; Rom. 9: 11; Rom. 11: 5, 7; Matt. 24: 22, 31; Col. 3: 12; Rom. 8: 33; 1 Pet. 1: 2; Gen. 17: 7; Jer. 30: 22; Jer. 31: 3.

Ref. 5—Rom. 8: 30; 2 Thess. 2: 14; 1 Cor. 1: 24; Rev. 17: 14; 1 Cor. 1: 9; Heb. 9: 15.

Ref. 6—Rom. 9: 11, 16; Rom. 8: 27, 28; cf. v. 23; Isa. 48: 8-12; Eph. 1: 4, 7; 2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.

Ref. 7—2 Thess. 2: 13; Rom. 1: 6, 7; 1 Cor. 1: 2; Jude. 1; Rev. 17: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 1, 2, 5; John 17: 2, 3, 12; John 6: 39, 40; 1 Pet. 2: 9; Jer. 30: 9.

Ref. 8—Acts 14: 16; 2 Pet. 2: 1-9; Rom. 9: 22; Jude 4; Jer. 30: 11; Isa. 14: 24-26; Isa. 13: 11; Isa. 51: 5, 6; Jer. 50: 45; Jer. 51: 7-9.

Ref. 9—Psalm 2; Matt. 22: 5, 6.

Ref. 10—Rom. 9: 22; Rom. 2: 8, 9; 2 Pet. 2: 9, 10; Rom. 2: 5; Rom. 1: 18-21.

Ref. 11—2 Pet. 3: 7, 9; Rom. 2: 8.

Ref. 12—Rom. 2: 5.

The above seems to be a fair statement, together with abundant citations, of the doctrine of election, together with God's purpose regarding the persistently disobedient and unbelieving and rebellious subjects of his kingdom who despise his goodness and reject his offer of mercy. The words, "Before the foundation of the world," quoted from Eph. 1: 4, may be understood of an absolute past eternity, of election considered as an integral part of the Decrees; but the expression, "purpose to elect and call," preserves the proper place of election as simply a part of the decree to be placed in its proper relation to other parts. The "call" naturally goes along with it, for this is the method of carrying out the decree of election, which is God's purpose to save. That the choice is said to be from the "fallen race of man," preserves the proper view-point as sublapsarian instead of supralapsarian, and this the Scriptures abundantly support. Or perhaps it is better to say that the two apparently conflicting views are harmonized in the only true way of making them conform to the facts of God's thought. It avoids the error of making God's ultimate design obliterate the details of the plan. No fault can be found with the phraseology, "purpose to elect and call," for what is God's purpose to elect but his decree to make an actual choice out of a race of real men, just as he calls his elect out of an existing humanity.

Even God cannot make an actual choice of a non-entity, and nobody with common sense is misled by the apostle's language when he says: "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world," or when he speaks of grace as having been "given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal," any more than he has a right to be deceived when it is said that the "Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world." Peter makes the necessary distinction when he speaks of Christ as "foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but manifested at the end of the times for your sake." Paul makes the above distinction when he speaks of Christians having been "called according to his purpose"; and this expression justifies the language, "purpose to call"; and "purpose to elect" simply makes a similar distinction between God's purpose in his unit plan and election which must logically come after the decree or purpose to create man and to permit his fall, not to speak of any further matters of arrangement.

The phrase "by (instrumental en) or in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2: 13), concerns the choice of election just as much if it be connected grammatically with "salvation," as if it be made to modify "chose" directly, for it explains that the salvation is that which constitutes the matter of the choice. It is, therefore, manifestly incorrect to consider election purely in the abstract, as section 5 does. The statement of the subject above made so agrees with the facts and the teaching of Scripture that even the Arminian will hardly be able to say aught against it. Moreover, it covers the whole ground, so that there is no place for either sections 4 or 5.

Sections 4 and 5 should be omitted altogether, for both are exceedingly misleading and objectionable. Section 4 should be eliminated because it mixes the human with the divine viewpoint, and this works confusion. To say that the number of the elect is "so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished," if not an inane truism, is positively false. God's purpose, it is true, lies back of and secures his foreknowledge of men's salvation. It would be just as sensible to speak of God's foreknowledge as being neither increased or diminished, as to make his assertion regarding his purpose; and it has been already sufficiently explained that election is a choice of individuals or persons, if that needs explanation.

The difficulty is that the statement starts out with the divine viewpoint and winds up with the human viewpoint. If God's purpose concerning the number of the elect could be changed it would be either no purpose at all or he would be defeated in effectuating his purpose. Since God's foreknowledge goes along with his purpose, it is needless to make the assertion that his foreknowledge is correct, for if it is not correct, it isn't foreknowledge at all. If it is foreknowledge, of course it cannot be changed. But the question arises, What is the use of making so senseless a statement? And so, a fatalistic result is reached as the most plausible solution, that it is intended to assert that it matters not what second causes may operate or what men may do or not do, they cannot

change the decree, which is either for or against them; or to quote the words of a cavalier: "You'll be damned if you do, and you'll be damned if you don't." This is positively false, and a caricature of the gospel. This misleading statement comes to us from the Lambeth articles, and from a supralapsarian source. It should by all means be eliminated. There is no good in it, but much of harm, which experience shows to be very real.

The fatalistic impression is deepened when the next section appears to express the fatalism in other language and to assert that men will be saved without reference to their characters, "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto." This is from the same mint as the last, and is the product of a false viewpoint and logic, for there is nothing in Scripture which justifies such assertions. It is a perversion of the Scriptures resting upon an evidently false interpretation of Rom. 9: 11, 13, 16, which is quoted to sustain it. Paul clearly has a totally different object in view when he makes his observations upon the case of Esau and Jacob. He does attribute Jacob's salvation to God's foreknowledge and purpose, such being prophetically declared to the mother, but he does not by any means say that the fate of either was outside the operation of second causes, much less that it was irrespective of their foreseen characters. The very opposite is clear from the Old Testament context of the passage quoted from Malachi, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." He does not at all assert that he hated Esau irrespective of his character. Such statements need to be cleared out of the Confession at the earliest possible date.

DOES THE DOCTRINE OF GENERAL INFANT SALVATION CONFLICT WITH THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT?

By the doctrine of the atonement is meant the true Scriptural doctrine of the atonement as it regards the extent of the atonement or the intent of Christ's propitiation. It seems evident that the limited view of infant salvation is encouraged, and perhaps fostered, by a limited atonement, although it may not be easy to show that the two things are really logically connected. It does not logically follow from a limited atonement which confines the benefit of Christ's death to the elect strictly, for possibly it may turn out that all dying infants are of the elect, as believers in infant salvation are convinced is the fact. In this case the limited atonement would not affect them. But if it be doubted that they are all elect, and this is the position of the doubters concerning universal infant salvation, then the idea that the infants of the heathen may be lost is encouraged by the opinion that Christ's atonement is strictly limited to the elect. If because non-elect the class in question has no interest in the atonement, of course it is the more certain that such infants are lost. The conclusion thus rests upon a supposition which is doubtful. But this indirect aid or encouragement which the doctrine of infant damnation receives must be regarded as in practice not inconsiderable.

It is not the purpose of this treatise to review the Confession and point out all the matters which call for revision, but to call attention only to those which are connected with the particular question of revision which is already before the church. The limits of this treatise have about been reached, and the treatment of this last question must be brief. Fortunately, the matter of atonement is raised in the third chapter of the Confession, and in the section next following the one last examined, namely, Sec. 6.

There can be no objection to the first sentence of section 6. Indeed, here is the word "foreordained" used in the very sense contended for in section 3, covering all the means of salvation. This is the scriptural view which follows up the decree of election with the purpose to use the necessary means to accomplish the desired end. The criticism concerns mainly, if not exclusively, the last sentence which clearly uses "redeemed" in the sense of the atonement or propitiation, and expressly limits the effects of this to the elect. It is not denied for one moment that there was a special reference in the atonement to the elect, for the Saviour was to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and this was implied in the very purpose of redemption. But the point is that the wording of the last sentence makes the impression that the reference is to "the elect only." This is not true, for otherwise the invitations of the gospel could not be made in good faith to the individual sinners of the world. If Christ did not in a true sense die for the world, the world could not be told to come to the gospel feast prepared for them. But this is the principal part of the gospel which the church is commissioned to proclaim. How, then, dare the church obscure this message by statements or speculations regarding God's secret purposes to the exclusion of the main commission? The word put into the mouth of the church, "whosoever will let him come," certainly implies that a propitiation has been provided for every soul to whom the message is conveyed. But the provision is not all, it must be accepted, even as the invitation to the feast and the partaking of the feast are entirely different things.

To say then, "Neither are any others redeemed by Christ" is false, because "redeemed by Christ" is spoken of in the sense of a propitiation provided, as distinguished from all the other parts of the process which result in actual salvation. It is true that redemption while mentioned as a part of a process, which applies as a whole to the elect only, may not be intended to deny in express terms that redemption had not some reference to the non-elect, but the sentence makes this impression and is certainly defective and misleading. A statement concerning redemption as it contemplates the world at large, should certainly be added to this account of the matter. The same defective view is found in chapter 8, sections 1, 5, and 8. Taken by itself, the account of Christ as "the Mediator between God and man" might seem to be broader, but immediately he is called "Saviour of his church" instead of Saviour of the world, and it is the people given to him in God's eternal purpose to whom redemption is again confined. The same view is found in section 5.

Christ renders his perfect obedience and sacrifice "for all those whom the Father hath given unto him"; and in section 8 we are told that "To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same," making the impression that his redeeming work had sole reference to the elect. So all the effects of his redeeming work which are summarized in what follows are similarly confined. Nowhere are we told that Christ did anything for the world. This is a great defect which should by all means be remedied. Nowhere is revision more needed than in these clauses.

The defect of section 6, chapter 3, might be remedied as follows: "While it is true that God provided a propitiation for the whole world, and freely offers salvation to the world upon condition of acceptance by faith of the salvation thus provided, it is also true that as a matter of fact, only Christ's sheep hear his voice, so that none are effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

Ref. 1—1 Tim. 2: 4-6; 1 Tim. 3: 10; Rom. 5: 25; 1 John 2: 2; John 4: 14. Ref. 2—To the old texts add John 6: 44; John 10: 14, 15, 26-29.

Before passing from this subject let it be noticed that while God's attitude and decree concerning the wicked has a proper statement in section 7, chapter 3, the corresponding statement of the Larger Catechism, Qu. 13 appears to be needlessly harsh by reason of the mixing of tenses and viewpoints in the clause, "hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted to the praise of the glory of his justice." The perfect tense, "hath passed by," etc., corresponds with "hath elected" and "hath chosen" just preceding, but this in itself gives an unnecessarily harsh effect, which is deepened by the introduction of the future, "to be for their sins inflicted." This makes the foreordination to wrath stand out more prominently since the infliction is separated in time, so that the space of the ages is included between the two. Why mix up the viewpoint of a past eternity with the end, and further complicate it with man's viewpoint which appears in the perfect tenses above mentioned? It would be better to adapt the language to that of the Confession by obliterating "hath," "to be" and "inflicted." While the clause "whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy (favor) as he pleaseth" is correct when properly understood, if nothing is said about anything done for the world at large it tends to make the impression that all mercy and favor are withheld from the wicked, therefore, it is all the more necessary that that phase of divine grace be presented.

The revisions which the writer has suggested, although so important from considerations of accuracy and the general acceptability of our creed, are unimportant from the point of view of orthodoxy, for they do not affect the integrity of our system of doctrine. The aim is to prevent well known misunderstandings which arise out of ambiguities of language. If these discussions and criticisms receive such attention as to provoke our people to thought, and to a careful consideration of these matters, the writer will feel repaid for the effort put forth to get these

subjects before the church. God grant that it may lead to a real revision of our creed while the church is still orthodox and capable of making a sound revision, and that we who are capable of such revision may not much longer delay to do service to God and humanity by making such revision as shall encourage true orthodoxy throughout the world.

